

**PANCHAYATI RAJ, BUREAUCRACY AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



PANCHAYATI RAJ, BUREAUCRACY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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FOREWORD

Though a great deal of lip sympathy is paid to the cause of rural development, in actual practice it is treated as less important than national defence, the growth of heavy industry, maintenance of stable consumer food prices, and the provision of a variety of essentially urban services.

However, there are signs that this is changing. Over the past quarter of century a rural lobby has come to play a rather important role in Indian politics as the proportion of agriculturists in parliament has risen, from 14.7 per cent in 1952 to over 40 per cent in 1984 elections.

The first programme to be ushered in in rural areas, was the Community Development Programme introduced in 1952. Its original premise was a concentration of outside funds and professional expertise for a 3-5 year period in selected rural areas called 'Blocks' with each block comprising 80-100 villages and about 100,000 people. A team of technical specialists, directed by a Block Development Officer (BDO) was assigned by the State Government to provide programme support to generalist VLWs, who were employed by the government to take essential information from a variety of specialised departments directly to villages.

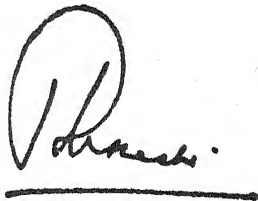
But within a few years of its establishment, it became clear to almost every one that the Community Development Programme as originally conceived had been woefully inadequate to the tasks it was assigned. It became politically impossible to restrict the programme to a small number of areas, with the result that Community Development Blocks began to mushroom in every state and a heavy burden was placed on VLWs. Most of them found it impossible to effect substantive changes in rural life and either ended up doing their jobs in a routine manner with emphasis on fulfilment of targets rather than institute real change.

Against this background, Panchayati Raj was conceived by the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1958 as a first attempt to correct community development shortcomings. It was thought that community development failed because the people had not participated in it and took a sense of responsibility through their own democratically elected organs. After 1958 all development funds too were supposed to be utilized by villagers through their elected organs than by appointed officials. The development bureaucracy was to serve the Panchayati Raj bodies in an advisory capacity.

However, the experience shows an enormous gap between the aspirations of those national leaders, who introduced Panchayati Raj in 1950s and the panchayats captured and controlled by village influentials in 1960s and 1970s. Panchayati Raj has severely been criticised and has usually been adjudged a failure because it has not produced the results its founders expected. Rather, it has reinforced elitism than encouraged greater participatoin.

It is often been said that the desired results of rural development programmes have not been achieved due to nonperformance on the part of local level bureaucracy, and apathetic attitude of panchayati raj representatives. It is also said that to achieve desired results of rural development programmes some structural changes in the local level bureaucracy and panchayati raj institutions are highly required. Keeping this fact in view, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India assigned study entitled "Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy and Rural Development" to the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. Prof. S.N. Mishra conducted the research in two states of India, *i.e.*, Bihar and Gujarat. The present study is the outcome of the said study sponsored by government. Prof. Mishra has tried to diagnose the maladies which affect the functioning of these two institutions of grassroots. Prof. Mishra has offered many suggestions regarding the better functioning of local level bureaucracy and greater involvement of general masses in rural development. I hope that the Book

will be appreciated by all those who are interested in rural development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Dubhashi', is written above a solid horizontal line.

NEW DELHI
MAY 13, 1986

(P.R. DUBHASHI)
Director
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

14th Nov 1944



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PREFACE

Rural development is considered as a process leading to: (a) agricultural productivity, (b) rural income, and (c) rural welfare in terms of health, nutrition, education, equality, employment, security and rural-urban differences. It is also a process which leads to a rise in the capacity of the people to control their environment accompanied by under distribution of benefits resulting from such control. In nutshell the three primary goals of rural development are raising agricultural and rural productivity, raising community solidarity and institutionalisation of equality. These goals of rural development can be achieved only through the dedicated service on the part of local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives. It is often talked about that the targets of rural development programmes are not achieved due to the apathy on the part of local level bureaucracy and Panchayat Raj representatives. It is also felt that to accelerate the pace of development in rural areas, some structural changes in local level bureaucracy and Panchayat Raj institutions are required.

Keeping this fact in view the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India, sponsored this study and assigned the task of completing this study to the Indian Institute of Public Administration. The basic purpose of this study was to examine whether the Panchayati Raj Institutions and their representatives were alive to their duties and felt concerned about all round development of rural areas. At the same time it was also intended to investigate about the functioning of local level bureaucracy as to what extent they cooperated with Panchayati Raj representatives in the implementation of rural development programmes. We also intended to know whether these two institutions at the grassroots level cooperated each other or whether there was a feeling of love and hate between them. Our purpose was also to examine

whether the existing structural arrangements of these two institutions was conducive for the all round development of rural areas or they required some change.

With this very purpose the study was conducted in two states of India, *viz.*, Bihar and Gujarat. The whole study has been divided into seven chapters, *i.e.*, Introduction, Panchayati Raj in Bihar and Gujarat, Perception of Non-officials of Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy and Rural Development, Official's Awareness of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Voluntary Organisations, Field Note and Observations, Suggestions and Training Need of Rural Development. The questionnaires with the help of which the study was conducted have found place in Appendix. We sincerely hope that the findings and suggestions of the study will help the general readers in understanding the functioning of local level Bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj Institutions in greater details. It will also help the policy makers to change their strategy in regard to implementation of rural development programmes.

During the course of completion of the present study, we received immense help and cooperation from different sources. We shall be failing in our duty, if we do not record our appreciation for them.

Our first and foremost duty is to acknowledge the co-operation and interest of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, for kindly sanctioning the project and providing finances for the present study. More specifically, we would like to thank Shri M. Subramanian, the then Additional Secretary in the Ministry and presently the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Agriculture and Shri A.R. Bandopadhyay, the then Joint Secretary (PR), who right from the beginning took special care in getting the project sanctioned. Shri Bandopadhyay was involved with the study at every stage and helped a lot in providing his valuable suggestions from time to time. Any amount of praise will be too inadequate to thank him.

We are equally indebted to our Director, Dr. P.R.

Dubhashi, who had been a constant source of inspiration and provided his able guidance at every stage of the study. He had been kind enough to go through the entire draft of the report and provided his valuable suggestions which helped a lot in presenting the things in the present shape. Words fail us to thank him adequately. Our thanks are also due to Prof. Kamta Prasad our colleague for constant encouragement and Shri Brij Bhushan, Registrar, IIPA for administrative support.

We are extremely thankful to the respondents, both officials and non-officials of both the states, Bihar and Gujarat, who kindly spared their valuable time and patiently replied to our questions. Among the district officials special mention may be made of Shri Raj Kumar Singh, District Magistrate, Patna, Shri Madan Tiwari, District Panchayat Officer, Patna, Shri G.B. Patel, DDO, Ahmedabad, Shri Anil Joshi, District Collector, Ahmedabad and Shri R.J. Pathak, Officer Incharge, Small Savings, Ahmedabad. But for their valuable help and cooperation the field work would not have been completed within record time.

I do not know how to thank my two Research Associates Miss Kushal Sharma and Miss Neena Sharma, who right from the inception to the completion of the study worked hard and helped me a lot at every stage. Thanks are also due to Miss Kshama Sharma who helped us in completing the field work.

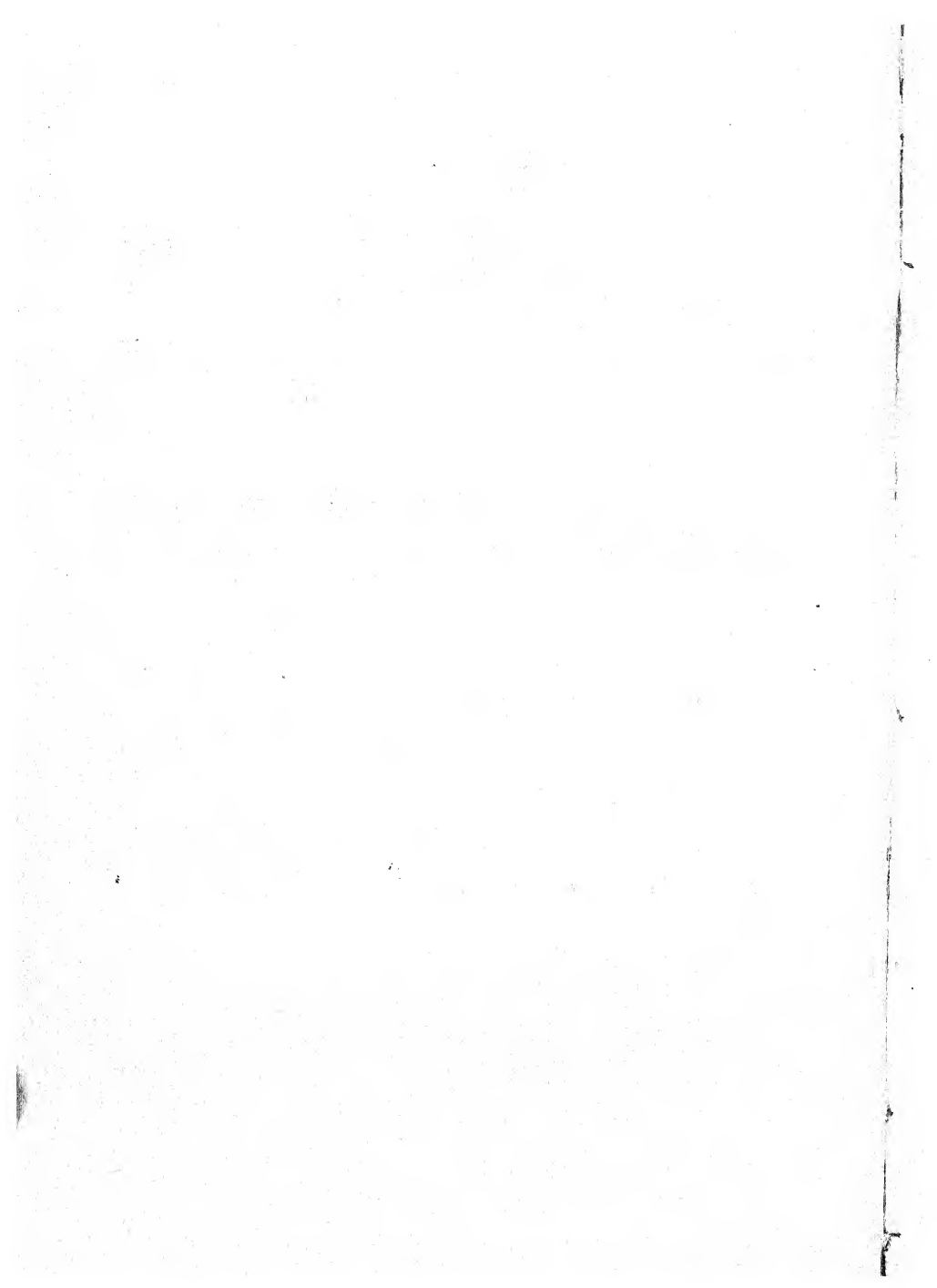
I do not know how to acknowledge the sincerity of Shri M.K. Gaur, Asstt. Editor, and his staff at the IIPA. Actually their sincere advice and selfless service have mainly been responsible in bringing out the book in the present shape and within the record time.

I would like to record my appreciation of Miss Mariamma Iype, the project typist, who typed several drafts and the final one with patience and interest.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After World War II the concept of 'development' has acquired greater significance. The liberation of many Afro-Asian nations from the clutches of colonial rule has been catalytic phenomenon in this direction. The countries which were poor and underdeveloped adopted different strategies for their development. Development, which was earlier associated mainly with economic growth, has now acquired a broader connotation¹. Development broadly means change in social, economic and political aspects of life resulting in happy human life. Development needs to be conceived as a dynamic process directed towards transforming an entire society (not merely some segments of it) enmeshing together its economic, social, political and administrative aspects for an all-round, balanced, upward change². It is usually conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered, or at least influenced by government action³. As Weidner points out, 'development is never complete, it is relative, more or less of it being possible. Development is a state

¹For a detailed discussion on different approaches to development, see Fred W. Riggs (ed.), *Frontiers of Development Administration*, Durham NC, Duke University Press, 1971; Irving Swerdlow (ed.), *Development Administration: Concept and Problems*, Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1963; Edward W. Weider (ed.), *Development Administration in Asia*, Durham, NC Duke University Press, 1970; S.K. Sharma (ed.), *Dynamic of Development*, Vols. I and II, New Delhi, Concept Publishers, 1977; G. Pandey, "Development: A Social Science View", *Development Policy and Administration Review*, Vol. III, No. 1, January-June, 1977.

²J.N. Khosla, "Development Administration—New Dimension", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Jan.-March, 1967, p. 18.

³John D. Montgomery, "A Royal Invitation Variations on Three Classic Themes", in John D. Montgomery and William J. Shiffin (eds.), *Approaches to Development, Politics Administration and Change*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1966, p. 259.

of mind, a tendency, a direction. Rather than a fixed goal, it is a rate of change in a particular direction".⁴

The goal of development consists in the enrichment of the total quality of life and its availability to all sections of the community. Development is not merely provision of opportunities but also their actual utilisation by the people for whom these are intended and involves creation of facilities necessary for such utilisation⁵. Milton J. Esman considers nation building and socio-economic progress as the two fundamental goals of all developing nations.⁶ Gunnar Myrdal views equality as the central issue in the development problems of underdeveloped countries⁷. Inequality and the trend towards raising inequality stand as a complex of inhibitions and obstacles to development and consequently, there is an urgent need for reversing the trend and creating greater equality as a condition for speeding up development.⁸

The Afro-Asian countries where the large majority of population lives in rural areas, rural development is the main thrust of national development effort. Since rural development is a preferred condition, the approaches and strategies of rural development adopted in various countries, depend on ideological orientation of the elite, structure of political power and perception of national needs.⁹ Thus rural development is a strategy for improve-

⁴Edward W. Weidner, "Development Administration: A New Focus for Research" in Ferrel Heady and Sysil L. Stokes (eds.), *Papers in Comparative Public Administration*, Michigan Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, 1962, p. 99.

⁵V.K.R.V. Rao, "Integrated Rural Development", *Janata*, Vol. XXXII, No. 35, October 9, 1977, p. 9.

⁶Milton J. Esman, "The Politics of Development Administration", in Montgomery and Shiffin, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁷Gunnar Myrdal, *The Challenge of World Poverty*, England, Penguin Books, 1977, p. 63.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹See Asian Centre for Development Administration, *Approaches to Rural Development in Asia: The Comparative Perspective*, Vol. 1, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, (Mimeographed); Norman T. Uphoff and Milton J. Esman, *Local Organization for Rural Development, Analysis of Asian Experience*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University, 1974, M.V. Mathur and Iqbal Narain, *Panchayati Raj Planning and Democracy*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1969.

ment in the social, economic and political life of the people with special emphasis on rural poor.

Rural Development is considered as a process leading to: (a) agricultural productivity, (b) rural income, and (c) rural welfare in terms of health, nutrition, education, equality, employment, security and rural urban differential.¹⁰ It is also a process which leads to a rise in the capacity of people to control their environment accompanied by under-distribution of benefits resulting from such a control¹¹. The three primary goals of rural development¹² are: raising agricultural and rural productivity, raising community solidarity, and institutionalisation of equality.

In India, more than four-fifths of population (80.1 per cent according to 1971 census) live in rural areas, spread over 5,89,626 villages. Gandhiji's view that "India lives in villages" still holds relevance. Development in India will have relevance only when the people living in these villages become its direct beneficiaries. About nine-tenths of population in rural areas depend on agriculture. In view of this, there is a tendency to equate rural development with agricultural development. But when we consider the pattern of land holdings the socio-economic inequalities, poverty, unemployment, the hierarchical social structure, etc., rural development cannot be equated with mere agricultural development, however, important it might be to rural development. In the country where more than 40 per cent of the people are living below the poverty line and millions are unemployed, the increase in standard of life of these poor, deprived, ignorant, illfed, unemployed people should be the major thrust of rural development.¹³

In view of the enormity and urgency of the rural problems, most of the developing countries initiated developmental

¹⁰Norman J. Uphaff and Milton J. Esman, *op cit.*, pp. 23-24.

¹¹Inayatulla, "A Proposed Conceptual Framework for the Study of Approaches to Rural Development in Asia", in *Approaches to Rural Development in Asia*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³Doughlas Enswinger, "Rural Development: What is it?" An unpublished paper delivered at the East-West Centres Conference on Integrated Communication for Rural Development, Honolulu Hawaii, December 2-6, 1974, p. 15.

programmes which led to creation of a plethora of new institutions—political, economic, social and administrative. Attention is particularly drawn to people's institutions because the programmes of development, it is generally agreed, are to be carried out not only by the state bureaucracy but also through effective public participation.¹⁴ The bureaucratic machinery alone is considered inadequate for the task of nation-building.¹⁵ Bureaucracy anywhere plays a more static role; thrust and dynamism required for development can come best from non-bureaucratic services. To promote political development and social justice, people's institutions are to be created.¹⁶ Establishing and sustaining viable institutions should be critical concern of modern political elite, planners and administrators in the developing countries since this is a major element in their operating strategy.¹⁷ Therefore, local organisation is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for accelerated rural development.¹⁸

PANCHAYATI RAJ

Many efforts in India were made before independence, both by individuals and voluntary associations, for rural reconstruction.¹⁹ After independence, community development and National Extension Services Programmes were launched in 1952 and 1953 respectively for the development

¹⁴J. N. Khosla, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁵See Milton J. Esman, "Politics of Development Administration", *op. cit.*, p. 69.

¹⁶G. Ram Reddy, *Panchayati Raj and Rural Development in Andhra Pradesh, India*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University, 1974, p. 88.

¹⁷See Milton J. Esman, "Institution Building in National Development" in G. Hambridge (ed.), *Dynamics of Development*, New York, Fredrick A. Praeger, 1974, p. 143.

¹⁸Norman T. Uphoff and Milton Esman, *op. cit.*, p. 10. See also Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Department of Rural Development, *Report on the Committee of Panchayati Raj Institutions*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 32-36 (Hereinafter cited as Asoka Mehta Committee Report).

¹⁹See V.P. Pandey, *Village Community Project*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1967.

of rural areas.²⁰ But the programmes failed to achieve their objectives of development goals.²¹ No amount of money spent on rural development nor all the might of the government can do for people as compared to what people can do for themselves.²² People who are expected to benefit from development must be involved, and must themselves take the responsibility for development. Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team, realising the importance of popular participation, recommended the creation of institutions which were to be statutory, elective, comprehensive in duties and functions, equipped with necessary executive machinery, with adequate resources, and with enough autonomy and freedom²³. The creation of the Panchayati Raj in 1959, with the object of entrusting the authority and responsibility for rural development to rural people is considered not only an innovation, but also a revolution.²⁴

The committee recommended a three-tier system for self-government at the grassroots level. On the basis of the recommendations of the Mehta Committee, when the Panchayati Raj institutions were introduced in early sixties, they were assigned three major tasks, viz., developmental, administrative, and political.

The Mehta Committee Report assigned greater importance to developmental tasks. However, the three tasks

²⁰See Carl C. Taylor, *et. al.*, *India's Roots of Democracy*, Bombay, Orient Longman, 1965; B. Mukerje, *Community Development in India*, Bombay, Orient Longman, 1961.

²¹Government of India, Planning Commission on Plan Projects, *Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Services*, New Delhi, Government of India, 1958, Vol. 1, pp. 1-5.

²²Douglas Enslinger, "Rural Development: What is it?" *op. cit.*, p. 19.

²³See Balwant Rai Mehta Study Report, *op. cit.*

²⁴Henry Maddick *Panchayati Raj: A Study of Rural Local Government in India*, London, Longman, 1970, p. 3; Norman D. Palmer describes it as the most exciting experiment in democratic decentralization in any developing country? See Norman D. Palmer, *The Indian Political System*, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, p. 104. A.H. Hanson and Janet Douglas considered Panchayati Raj as India's distinctive contribution to the theory and practice of local government, see A. Hanson, Janet Douglas, *India's Democracy*, Delhi, Vikas, 1972, p. 184.

were supposed to maintain a mutual inter-relationship. But the greatest hindrance with the Panchayati Raj institutions, in regard to developmental task, turned out to be that they had no financial resources at their disposal with the result that they started mounting pressures on the district level bureaucracy, which ultimately resulted into the hostile attitude of bureaucracy towards these institutions.²⁵

At the same time, in the course of events, the MLAs and MLCs and other politicians also gradually realised the strategic importance of the Panchayati Raj institutions and visualised their future rivals in the representatives of the Panchayati Raj institutions. As such virtually they launched a non-cooperation movement against Panchayati Raj institutions and their representatives which resulted in the decline of these institutions and their performance. Their performance changed the basic character and objectives of the Panchayati Raj institutions making them directionless. Due to the decrease in support from political decision-makers supplemented by indifferent attitude of local level bureaucracy, the developmental role of the Panchayati Raj institutions receded in the background and political role became more prominent²⁶.

What had been the basic error with the experiment with the Panchayati Raj institutions is that they were treated as means to strengthen the bourgeois democracy. But the fact is that the two are incompatible. What is needed in the present context is that the middle class parliamentary system has to be replaced by democratic institutions which will emerge from the bottom. The Panchayati Raj institutions should be treated as catalytic agents to change and allowed to operate without any hindrance in every walk of our rural society—social, cultural, economic and political. If properly equipped with all resources and expertise and permitted to take maximum initiative, the Panchayati Raj institutions could certainly deliver goods to our rural society.

The basic philosophy behind the Panchayati Raj institutions was to ensure people's participation. Unless participa-

²⁵S N. Mishra and K. Sharma, *Problems and Prospects of Rural Development*, Delhi, Uppal, 1983, p. 80.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 81.

tion of general masses is ensured at every level of our politico-administrative system, we cannot think of real democracy and development. If allowed to function properly, the Panchayati Raj institutions could be the most effective weapon against the extremist forces of right and left, *i.e.*, communalism and communism.

These institutions were primarily intended to unleash the arrested process of change and growth. Whether the Panchayati Raj is regarded as representing an extension of the community development programme or an institutionalisation of the concept of rural local self-government in the country the fact remains that, as an instrument of development, it generates factors and forces leading to fresh tensions and new disorders—political and social.

Due to the non-performance of these institutions in the seventies, a feeling started developing that the Panchayati Raj was like 'a God that failed'. However, it would be wrong to take the extreme view. At least it had the immediate effect of galvanizing the average citizen in rural India and in the places where the system struck roots, it helped in narrowing the gap between bureaucracy and the people. At the same time, it also succeeded in drawing a development goal for the people.

The second committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Asoka Mehta was appointed to look into the maladies of Panchayati Raj institutions, which recommended some definite steps to restructure and strengthen them so that they could function as an effective instrument of rural development.

While examining the issue and suggesting steps for revitalising them, the principal thesis, before the committee was the functional necessity for decentralisation of administration. It may be called 'new approach' towards the Panchayati Raj. One may feel that such a 'philosophy' or 'approach' conceives of the Panchayati Raj in somewhat narrow terms. It gives a feeling that the Panchayati Raj is a mere administrative contrivance whose justification lies only in terms of rural development. It may have the secular touch if the Panchayati Raj or rural local self-government was regarded like its counterparts at the state and central levels as a system

of government having a measure of autonomy in the matters of its functioning and existing in its own rights.

With regard to rural development, the Zila Parishad would be the first point of decentralisation and the basic unit of the Panchayati Raj, involved with a comprehensive range of developmental responsibilities. At the grassroots level, the Mandal Panchayats will be the hub of development activities.

One of the knotty problems that defied satisfactory solution in the Panchayati Raj has been its functions. Very few state governments have given careful thought to this subject. The committee adopted a rational approach. It felt that an exhaustive list of functions to be performed by the Panchayati Raj institutions in all the states cannot be prepared, for it felt that these institutions had to tackle "Location of specific programmes". It should be adopted on basic criterion and that is "that development being a dynamic process, functions cannot remain static; periodic adjustments would be necessary to suit the changing requirements". Decentralisation should be genuine, and adequate. It should be regarded as a functional necessity and not as an act of political charity. All development functions relating to district which are now being performed by the state government should be placed under Zila Parishad. It would be the responsibility of Zila Parishad to plan the development programme and implementation would be left to the Mandal Panchayats. The state governments, however, would handle such as agricultural research, medium irrigation projects, college and university education, etc. The regulatory functions would continue to remain with the collector but in the long run, the goal to be pursued is that all the regulatory functions should be transferred to local bodies and that the collector should be under the Zila Parishad. One may apprehend serious consequences of this arrangement (administrative dyarchy) for a collector has to please two masters, the elected non-official chairman of the Zila Parishad and the government high ups in the hierarchy.²⁷

In regard to participation, it may be assumed that the end product of the political system or for that matter sub-system is the authoritative allocation of values for the entire society geared to solving local problems through its major constituents, viz., local leaders, officials and the masses. In order to deliver the goods, the constituents of sub-system are expected to interact with one another and work in union.

Unfortunately actuated by egoistic political culture, political leaders in collusion with local level officials exploit the situation. Consequently, the benefits of development schemes have gone to the elite section of our rural society. As the masses exhibit the characteristic of subject culture and the benefits did not percolate to them, they are not responsive to development programmes. For the successful implementation of the programmes of integrated rural development, the needy and weaker sections of society should not only be encouraged to participate in the decision-making process in various ways and at different levels but also be stimulated to have their share in the benefits of development programmes.

The importance of people's participation lies in view of long term effect of the process of modernisation. The planned intervention in this process is the *sine qua non* of integrated development. With a view to forestalling the dangers of bureaucratic elitism and totalitarianism, people's participation becomes imperative. Its importance cannot be overstressed in the wake of the moral degeneration of the political leadership. As for integrated rural development a case may be made out for the structural arrangements based on territorial and functional representations reconciling community issues with group interests in order to make people's participation effective at different stages of programme formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation. Such an arrangement would through the process of political socialisation, manifest and latent, skin off a process of state and nation-building.²⁸

In order that the presence of poor in participation might be felt, it is necessary to draft them on community action agencies. In fact, even after thirtynine years of independence,

²⁸S.N. Mishra, Kushal Sharma and Neena Sharma, *Participation and Development*, Delhi, NBO, 1984, p. 121.

the masses are not aware of their rights and privileges. They should, therefore, first of all be made conscious of their rights. This can be achieved only if the political leaders and the bureaucracy identify themselves with the problems of the people and educate them to inculcate the feeling of citizen culture.²⁹

BUREAUCRACY

During the recent years the concept of government has undergone a fundamental change from being a guardian of law and order to assuring the role of custodian of the welfare and well being of the people. Following its penetration into social and psychological domains, hitherto considered autonomous range and character of its activities have acquired new dimensions and depth. In developing countries new elites have undertaken the task of 'nation-building' along these lines, entailing a sustained programme of planned economic and social change.

Realising these goals and giving them a concrete shape, the responsibility has fallen mainly on the bureaucracy. This has resulted in a substantial change in the role of bureaucracy which instead of merely maintaining law and order and collecting revenue is now endowed with the task of social and economic transformation. In many of the 'new nations' bureaucracy is the only stable and continuous social organisation available for carrying out the development task and is faced with the challenge of undertaking what Karl. W. Deutsch calls 'Social Organization'. This is the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialisation and behaviour.³⁰

Bureaucracy in the developing countries has to undertake several new complex functions in order to build a new social order. Another new situation that they face is their style of functioning: They are supposed to carry out various functions with active involvement of the people, which in turn,

²⁹S.N. Mishra *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

³⁰Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", *American Political Science Review*, September 1961, pp. 493-94.

is not an easy task against the background of long colonial rule and consequent absence of democratic tradition limited economic resources, general apathy and indifference of the people towards the goal particularly in development proposals. The underdeveloped countries have to tackle all the problems in various spheres simultaneously.³¹ In a country like ours where the concept of welfare state has come to stay the bureaucracy has to cope with the rising expectations of the people. Due to rising expectations of the people, new waves of tensions and conflicts have cropped up, which sometimes create serious problem of law and order and bureaucracy is left in a very very difficult situation. In such a situation bureaucracy is expected to discharge its turn duty of welfare and law and order with equal devotion and maximum precaution and care.

In order to accomplish this task in a country like India, three conditions are essential. Firstly, the ideas, attitudes values, orientation and pre-disposition of bureaucrats should be changed to accept a new role of prime movers and energisers in the process of modernisation where they have not to rule or master the people but help the citizen. They have to be sensitive to their needs and aspirations and respond to them in their policy making, programming and implementation.

They have to inspire trust and confidence and elicit the active support and cooperation of the people in the task of national reconstruction. If the bureaucracy succeeds as a major instrument of transformation, it has to break away from its familiar attitudes and work ways, immerse self in the values of social change, reorient its attitude to the very people it has been in the habit of ruling and develop a partnership with them and their representatives for performing the task that the country has set for itself. So it can be said that the success or failure of bureaucracy in a democratic country like India largely depends on the relationship bureaucrats establish with the people and their representatives.

Secondly, bureaucratic organisation, patterned on the model of the collectorate emphasising procedural rigidities and impersonality, is unsuited to carry out development programmes and changes calling for a responsive attitude to popular needs and aspirations. The district administrative model, developed in India during colonial era, is characterised by formalism, rule bound behaviour, unresponsive, insecurity and lack of fresh initiative. Administration in such a situation reflected comprehensive professionalism, procedural rigidity and indifference to the people. Thus the bureaucratic organisation developed under a colonial regime to fulfil system maintenance goals cannot achieve system change goals without fundamental transformations. The bureaucratic organisation concerned with development goals must be flexible enough to permit modifications in plans and programmes suited to local conditions.

Thirdly, since the political leaders function as effective and critical links between the people and the government by mobilising for proposal of development and change envisaged in government policy, there has to be a change in their attitudes, values and behaviour. It must be stressed that administration, internally, involves a political process with an effective role for political leaders. Their task does not end with evolving government policies and programmes, they have also to share the responsibility with the administrators in eliciting popular participation of civic affairs in a democratic polity like India, it is essential for bureaucrats and political leaders to develop a new understanding of their roles and change their values orientations and attitudes to forge new relationships.

The existing literature does not provide adequate guidelines for evaluating the functioning of bureaucracy in the developmental context. The existing literature is inadequate not due to lack of interest in the role of bureaucracy in social change, but because of a peculiar slant given to the study of bureaucracy, by perspective use to observe and evaluate its functioning. This perspective is derived from Max Weber who was first to formulate the basic theoretical constructs of an ideal type bureaucracy as an administrative institution. These formulations were subsequently modified by Peter B.

and Robert Merton. According to Weber 'Bureaucratization' offered above all, the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specialised administrative functions according to purely objective consideration. The 'objective' discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to calculable rules and without regard for persons.³²

It is assumed that any study of bureaucracy which ignores the Weberian model is not sociological. It is really forgotten that the rational functional approach to authority and its disposal as suggested by the Weberian model fails to consider the various motivational organisational and contextual factors that operate and lead to inflexibility in dealing with a changing environment and a subtle displacement of goals and loyalties in the face of new strains and challenges. An excessive concern with the formal structural characteristics of bureaucracy does not permit either to identify traditional constraints or to discern clearly the new forces that impinge on its functioning. Thus a study of bureaucracy in the context of developing societies like India will have to depart from the Weberian model and develop a framework which can enable to observe its performance under rapidly changing conditions.

Viewed in this perspective an empirical study of bureaucracy should in the first place, be extricated from the formal normative overtones of the legal rational mould. It should be examined as an operative mechanism in the process of 'development administration'. The purpose of an empirical enquiry should be to describe bureaucracy as growing concern at a given level. In conceiving such a study, it should be useful to confine the observations to three components, namely, bureaucratic organisation, bureaucrats and the political leaders. Because bureaucrats and political leaders interact within the framework of bureaucratic organisation for the realisation of certain set goals, the study should call for the three levels of investigations, i.e., (i) individual bureaucrats, (ii) bureaucratic structure, and (iii) political leaders. Given the goals assigned to the public bureaucracy and the slowly

³²H.H. Garth and C.W. Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 215.

changing environment, much depends on the orientations, attitudes and capacities bureaucrats display as individuals and as a group. The administrators as individuals have life histories of their own which have been shaped as a result of continued interaction with their environment. The second set of variables relates to the bureaucratic system: The role definition as well as role perceptives of individual bureaucrats are to a considerable extent determined by the way in which an organisation is conceived and its goals are defined. In brief the achievement of the bureaucrats is conditioned by the overall climate of the bureaucratic organisation manifested in terms of certain physical conditions, inter-personnel relationships within and between levels, dominant group norms and their own levels of satisfaction as engendered by the organisation.

The third set of variables relates to the nature of environment in which the public bureaucracy has to operate. The administrative sub-system operates in the local social and cultural milieu of the society and both influence and are influenced by their sub-systems.

Thus bureaucrats, bureaucratic system and political leaders constitute the three vital components for the functioning of bureaucracy at a given level.

In present days a lot is being talked about a committed bureaucracy in our country and a good deal about the government failure to accomplish development goals is being attributed to the bureaucracy at various levels, particularly, the lower ones. Bureaucracy is being condemned as outmoded, inefficient and corrupt. At an AICC meeting in December 1969 some of the Congress leaders, like Mr. Chandrashekhar (now the Janata Party President) maintained: "the present bureaucracy under the orthodox and conservative leadership of the ICS with its upper class prejudices can hardly be expected to meet the requirements of social and economic change along socialist lines. The creation of an administrative cadre committed to national objectives and responsive to our social needs is an urgent necessity."³³

Certainly blaming bureaucracy alone will not improve

³³*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, December 1, 1969.

governmental performance. Ultimately all plans and programmes, however, well conceived they may be, have to be executed by the bureaucracy. Instead of planning bureaucracy in a generalised manner and finding faults with the administrators, who shoulder the major responsibility of executing all the plans and policies we have to address ourselves to an important question of trying to find out why do they lack commitment to the set goals and show indifference in their accomplishment?

In the present situation when much is being talked about the failure of bureaucracy at the lower levels and the remedial measures that need to be taken to improve the situation, it would be useful to discover the impediments and hurdles bureaucrats experience in the performance of their tasks. Instead of accusing the bureaucrats for their failure in performing assigned tasks, it will be fruitful to examine their perceptions, evaluation and judgement of the system and of the political leaders in order to find out how far these elements provide them needed support.

In the theoretical framework of Rural Development, the Panchayati Raj and the Bureaucracy, provided above, the main focus of our enquiry is to study the evaluation and perception of the administrators, the bureaucratic structure and political leaders, the bulk of our analysis will be based on the response of officials and political leaders in terms of their evaluation of self, system and the environment. Based on our findings to above enquiries some meaningful suggestions would be provided to accelerate the pace of rural development and to improve the socio-economic condition of such persons who are living below the poverty line.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Before laying down the basic objectives of the study it is pertinent to note that for successful implementation of rural development programmes, since independence, much emphasis has been laid on decentralisation of administrative and democratic institutions. At the grassroots levels, the lower levels of bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj institutions are supposed to be responsible for successful implemen-

tation of rural development schemes.

Our past experience in regard to rural development programmes speaks of the fact that there had been considerable gap between the goal desired and goal achieved. The main reason for this dismal performance was that the local level bureaucracy worked in complete isolation and did not motivate the Panchayati Raj representatives to participate effectively in these programmes. In such a situation, the Panchayati Raj institutions failed to deliver goods to the people and a feeling started developing that the Panchayati Raj was like 'a God that failed'. As such, need arose to examine as to how to revitalise these institutions so that they may function as an effective instrument of development and catalytic to change. Another important problem felt, in regard to rural development programmes, was how to ensure the effective coordination between the local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj institutions in planning and implementation of rural development schemes at the village, block and district levels. The answer to these problems, to a great extent, was provided in the recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee Report. However, the recommendations on the basis of which a model bill was prepared at the Chief Ministers' Conference in August 1979, is yet to be passed and implemented by the state governments.

Besides strengthening several old programmes, in recent years, emphasis has been laid on increase in allocation of resources and to introduce new programmes like IRDP, NREP, Antodaya, Employment Guarantee Programme, etc. The success of these programmes would largely depend on how best the local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj institutions function and participate in the implementation of the programmes. In the process of both programmes formulation and programme implementation, complete harmony and effective coordination supplemented by sincere cooperation between them are highly required. If this goal is achieved only then we can think in terms of institution-building for rural development. As such, it becomes the duty of the academics to peep into the problem and based on micro-studies suggest remedies as to how best the rural

development programmes could be formulated and implemented with effective support and cooperation of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

At the same time the problem of coordination as well as the channel of communication at the local level, particularly, in the context of recently created DRDAs also deserves special attention.

In past, a number of studies had been taken up to study different aspects of local level bureaucracy and functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions. The present study, however, makes an important departure from the previous studies in the sense that there is relatively sharper focus on aspects of institution-building for rural development striking a balance between local level burcaucracy and the Panchayati Raj institutions.

In the framework provided above the basic objectives of the study are as follows:

- (a) To what extent the present political and administrative arrangements of the Panchayati Raj and the local level bureaucratic set-up are suitable to an all round development of rural areas, and to ascertain the perception and awareness of the functionaries of these two organisations;
- (b) If the present structure is not satisfactory, what changes could be brought about to make them more functional and development oriented;
- (c) Whether the Panchayati Raj representatives put pressure on the local level bureaucracy for selfish ends;
- (d) What are the factors which compel the local level bureaucracy to succumb to such pressures;
- (e) Whether the politics of distribution of development spoils has led to increased interference of local level bureaucracy in political affairs of rural areas with particular reference to the Panchayati Raj institutions;
- (f) To find out whether the general masses are allowed to participate in development programmes. If not what measures could be adopted to ensure effective

participation of people in the functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions as also in the development programmes;

- (g) To explore possibilities of resource mobilisation for rural development; and
- (h) Finally, based on our findings, what measures could be adopted to make the Panchayati Raj institutions effective agent of change and development.

Methodology

Selection of Area: In view of the objectives mentioned above and in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, it was decided to adopt comparative approach in this study by selecting two states (one developed and another backward). Therefore, Bihar and Gujarat were selected as representative states of the two categories.

Since the study was to be carried out only in one district of each state, proper criteria for selecting districts had to be evolved. This was done after holding discussions with state officials, incharge of the Panchayati Raj institutions, and only such districts were selected which had both rural and urban components and also had sufficient exposure to the functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions. Based on this criteria, Patna district in Bihar and Ahmedabad district in Gujarat were selected for a comparative study. Another major factor in selecting Patna district in Bihar was that all the three organs of the Panchayati Raj institutions were made operative in this district in 1964 on experimental basis and were functioning satisfactorily since then. Similarly as reported by the government officials of Gujarat, the Ahmedabad district recorded a satisfactory performance in regard to the functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions. These factors also weighed much in favour of selecting Patna and Ahmedabad districts.

While selecting the districts, another point of consideration was whether to have some sample blocks/talukas for field investigation. Since it was a micro study, to make it more meaningful and authentic, we decided to cover all the blocks/talukas instead of going for some selected blocks/

talukas. During the course of field investigation we covered all the 16 blocks of Patna district, namely, Dhanerua, Poon-Poon, Phulwari, Bihta, Maner, Massoureh, Vikram, Palliganj, Phatua, Bhakhtiyarpur, Pandarak, Barh, Deena Pur, Mokamah, Patna Sadar, and Naubat Pur. Similarly, we covered all the seven Talukas—Viramgam, Daskroi, Dehgam, Sanand, Dholka, Dhandhuka, and Ahmedabad city of Ahmedabad district.

Schedule and Technique of Data Collection

The data for the present study was collected both through primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources included consultation of the Panchayati Raj acts of both the states, and official files in regard to bureaucratic functioning. In course of field work relevant circulars and guidelines issued by the state/central governments from time to time were also consulted.

The primary sources included serving of schedules on respondents, formal and informal discussions, and participant and non-participant observations.

Two different schedules—one for bureaucracy and another for the Panchayati Raj representatives were prepared in English and at the time of interview translated into Hindi. Before serving the schedule on sample respondents, both the schedules were pre-tested in the Manpur block of Gaya district of Bihar. While pre-testing the schedules, it was noticed that some questions required to be revised. In both the questionnaires 11-12 questions were removed and the same number of new questions were added to the original schedules to make them scientific. The questions used in both schedules are basically of two types: fixed answer questions and opinionative questions. The scores on fixed answer questions have been presented in tabular form in Appendix and the opinion expressed by respondents to our opinionative questions have been categorised and have been added with the explanations given in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

During the course of serving the questionnaires on respondents it was felt that desired information was not coming out due to the formal environment. As such, we also depended on informal discussions which proved quite useful.

Just to verify the informal statements given by the respondents, we also attended the formal meetings of the Panchayat Samities and Zila Parishad/Zila Panchayat. Apart from seeking information from the sample respondents, we also tried to obtain the viewpoints of the cross-sections of the society by going to their places and talking at length about local level bureaucracy, the Panchayati Raj institutions and rural development programmes. This method also helped us a lot in different manner. Through this method at least we were able to know such facts which had not been given by the sample respondents of both the categories.

As regards the sample size we chose 80 respondents from both the categories from both the states. The 80 officials included district, block/taluka, and village. Similarly, the non-officials, *i.e.*, the Panchayati Raj representatives included chairman and members of Zila Parishad/Zila Panchayat, chairman and members of Panchayat Samities and Mukhiyas/Sarpanchas of Gram Panchayats. However, the sample of the Panchayati Raj respondents in Ahmedabad remained limited to 69 only as at the time of serving the schedules they were not available and time was limited at our disposal. The entire field work was completed within two months excluding ten days in pretesting, in both the states.

During the course of field study a lot of inconvenience was faced by the research team. In Bihar the officials and the Panchayati Raj representatives both were found to be quite cooperative. However, remoteness of villages posed some problems. But in contrast to Bihar officials, particularly at the state secretariat level, in Gujarat were non-cooperative. However, the District officials, particularly, the DDO, the collector, and the officer attached to the research team were quite cooperative. With their help and cooperation we were able to complete the field work within the prescribed period. At this stage a word of praise may be expressed for the representatives of the Panchayati Raj institutions of Gujarat who cooperated with the research team and helped a lot in collecting the desired information.

CHAPTER II

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN BIHAR AND GUJARAT

BIHAR

Though under strict government control local self-government institutions, in Bihar, had been in existence even in pre-independence period. Under the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act, 1885, a Union Committee had been constituted by the Provincial Government for a village or a group of villages. However, they did not function well due to the paucity of funds. After the introduction of 'dyarchy' in the province, the legislation of 1922 created Union boards, covering on an average, an area of five to ten miles. But again the newly created boards failed to play their part because of inadequate finance and lack of proper leadership. The legislation of 1922 provided for Village Panchayats also, but they were intended to adjudicate minor local disputes. When the Congress came into power in 1937, the idea of creating a statutory panchayat was mooted. Again, in 1946, the Congress Government resolved to create "local self-government with an active involvement of the village communities". Accordingly, the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act 1947 was passed which came into operation in 1949.

Prior to this the district board, created in 1885, was the first general purpose unit of local self-government designed to serve the rural areas within the district. In the initial stage the District Magistrate was the *ex officio* Chairman of the board. However, in pursuance of the policy of associating the people with administration, the non-officials were allowed to function as the Chairman of the board, and attempt was made to make the board an elective institution. Although the nationalist leaders discovered in the district boards and the local boards (created later on for each

sub-division) a means for capturing political power, they were not satisfied with their role as agents of rural development. Since the election to the board did not take place for one reason or the other, in 1958 the state government took the management of the boards in its hands.

This step of the government proved a prelude to the reorganisation of the entire structure of rural local self-government. While the state government was still groping for appropriate units of rural government in the district, the inauguration of the community development programme called for the creation of a new pattern of local government, as the programme was based on the principle of people's participation. To get the people involved with planning and implementation of programmes, the creation of blocks led to the creation of popular bodies at the grassroots level. However, from the viewpoint of community development, the evaluation of rural local self-government was gradual. To evoke local initiative in the programme the Block Advisory Committees (BACs), created in 1955, failed, partly because of their advisory character but mainly because of the predominance of bureaucratic elements in them. In 1958, these Committees were converted into Block Development Committees (BDCs) with such changes as were intended to make them more representative with greater executive power. However, even the BDCs remained largely passive and ineffective. Accordingly, the Mehta Study Team underscored the need for creating an inter-connected three-tier system of local self-government in the countryside with adequate powers and financial resources.

THE STRUCTURAL PATTERN

Village Panchayat

The Act of 1947 provided for the creation of a Panchayat for a village or a group of villages with a population of one thousand. This criterion of population was later raised to 4,000 for a panchayat. The creation of the halka (a unit of revenue administration within an Anchal or Circle) in 1955 again necessitated the delimitation of the Panchayat so as each halka could cover two or three Panchayats.

Since then, the convenience of the revenue administration rather than sociological factors have guided the delimitation of its area. As a result, the Panchayat is neither a compact nor a viable unit; it is mostly unwieldy, on an average comprising 6.3 villages and a population of 3240. The sub-committee appointed in 1973 to recommend amendments to the Act of 1947 (cited hereafter as the Bage Sub-Committee after the name of its Chairman S.K. Bage), therefore, suggested the creation of a Panchayat for 1,000 to 1,500 persons.

The Gram Sabha (village assembly) is a general body of the Panchayat and consists of all adults residing within its areas. It has to pass the Panchayat budget at its annual meeting and review its accounts of the last year at its half-yearly meetings. In view of the low attendance in the Sabha, the provision of a quorum of one fourth was amended in 1959 and reduced to one-eighth of its total membership. Even so, its meetings have been thinly attended, unenthusiastic and unsuccessful. Similarly only technically speaking has the adjourned Sabha been successful because no quorum is required for such a meeting. The Sabha has played a formal and ceremonial role, though, by enabling every adult to participate in it, has tended to promote a participatory democratic culture in the village.

The Act of 1947 provided for a Panchayat Executive Committee of not less than seven and not more than fifteen members including a mukhiya (President). The amendment Act of 1959 ended this flexibility and fixed its strength at nine. Previously, all its members were nominated by an elected mukhiya, but now four members are nominated and the remaining five (including mukhiya) to be elected by all the adults of the Panchayat. For this purpose Panchayats have been divided in four wards. The amendent Act of 1959 provided for the duration of the Executive Committee according to the class of the Panchayat to which it belonged.¹ As the government could not classify the Panchayats, the earlier provision of three years' duration still continues. The executive has to meet once a month

¹The Act provides for three classes of Panchayats, i.e., Class I, Class-II and Class-III. Accordingly the term of office of Executive Committee is 5, 3 and 2 years respectively.

and is expected to give direction to the collective efforts in the village(s) and to operate as an agency of the government. In spite of the efforts made in 1959 for democratised and broad-based executive, it is mostly a defunct body, because its members tend to be casual and lukewarm in attending the meetings of village executive. As a result of apathy on the part of the members of village executive, the Mukhiya has been left to function in an authoritarian fashion. To rationalise its working, the Bage Sub-Committee sought to raise its strength from nine to nineteen of which sixteen would be elected directly and three coopted by the elected members. The Sub-Committee proposed to make it obligatory on the part of Mukhiya to convene at least three meetings, failing which they should be disqualified for elections to the Panchayat in the future. To bring economy and efficiency the Sub-Committee suggested the duration of the executive committee of five years. But our practical experience suggests that it will hardly bring any effect on the functioning of the executive committee. At the present moment due to inordinate delay in the election of executive committee the existing committee functions almost for a decade but hardly brings economy and efficiency.

Though the Gram Catchery and Gram Raksha Dal are the integral part of the Gram Panchayat, their performance had been far from satisfactory. As such due to their non-functional character a detailed description of these organisations is hardly required at this place. It will suffice to say that the village court, consisting of five elected (including the Sarpancha) and four nominated panches, has certainly reduced litigation in the village. The VVF is a voluntary organisation of men between the ages of eighteen and thirty with a dalpati (chief officer). However, since no salary is paid to its head, he does not devote adequate time to this organisation. Similarly, for want of finance and guidance needed in administering its organisation, the VVF failed miserably to achieve its stipulated objectives. Recently the Panchayati Raj police system has been introduced. The immediate result of this police system is very encouraging. In the middle of 1985 the state government promulgated an ordinance and provided for indirect election of the

Mukhiya gust to check violence in the elections, However, the ordinance was immediately withdrawn on the demands of opposition in state legislature.

Panchayat Samiti

Though an intermediate organisation, the panchayat samiti is regarded as the key institution in the framework of Panchayati Raj. This institution is a representative of the entire block population and the MLA of the area finds a potential rival in its head. When the community development and national extension service were inaugurated, the state government, as an economy measure, created the block at the existing Anchal level. The Tyagi Sub-Committee, appointed to recommend amendment in the Act of 1961 (hereafter to be cited as the Tyagi Sub-Committee after the name of its Chairman, Lal Singh Tyagi), therefore, suggested delimiting the area of the block keeping in view the population, geography, resources, etc.

In regard to composition of Panchayat Samiti the Balwantraji Mehta Committee recommended for an indirect election. But the Bihar Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961 provides for *ex officio* members in the main. Accordingly all the mukhiyas under the jurisdiction of Panchayat Samiti are its *ex officio* members. Besides the Chairman and Vice-President of the municipality and Notified Area Committee (NAC) respectively, if they are any within the block, three representatives of the cooperative societies and one of the members of Central Co-operative Bank, are the *ex officio* members of the Samiti. The Act of 1961 provides for cooption of such castes, classes, and interests groups like Scheduled Castes and Tribes and women, if they have not got otherwise representation on it. Such persons of experience in administration, rural development, and public life, who may benefit the Samiti also find place on it.

Deviating from the proposals of the Mehta Study Team and the Committee on Panchayati Raj elections, the Act of 1961 conferred associate membership on the local MLA, MLC and MP without the right to vote on the Samiti. The tenure of the Samiti is three years. But if a person who holds office in other organisation, has to resign from his original

position after his election to the Panchayat Samiti. The Samiti is a completely non-official body headed by a pramukh (president) who is elected by its members from among themselves for three years. However, the present composition of the samiti is not conducive for its healthy growth. In the first place, the inclusion of the members of cooperative societies has made its elections keenly contested and has led to political rivalries in the non-political cooperative societies. Second, the provision for the cooption of men of experience is being utilised by the majority group in the Samiti which has encouraged groupism and casteism in the functioning of the Samiti. Third, instead of enhancing the prestige of the Samiti, the inclusion of the legislators has proved harmful. It is because of the facts that the legislators, instead of working for the balanced growth and development of the area act more with an eye upon their electoral prospects in this coming elections. The incidents of intimidation of the rural bureaucrats by these legislators for not acting on their behests are not uncommon. Surprisingly, the Tyagi Sub-Committee, while recommending that the local MLC and the MP be kept out of the Samiti, proposed to retain the local MLA in it, which does not seem logical on any account.

Zila Parishad

As per recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta study team the Act of 1961 provided for the Zila Parishad at the district level with no executive power. The existing boundary of a district may not be regarded as a compact area unit for the purpose of development administration as the traditional jurisdiction of a district was carried out for revenue and law and order administration. Therefore, the Tyagi Sub-Committee in its report suggested delimiting the area of the district, especially on the basis of population, geographical and social make up and resources.

Consistent with its advisory character and the reduced degree of decentralisation at the district level, the Act of 1961 provided for an indirectly elected body. The Parishad consists of all pramukhs within the district; all MLAs and Members of Lok Sabha whose constituencies lie wholly or

partly in the district; all MLCs and Members of Rajya Sabha residing within the district; three persons elected by an electoral college consisting of the Commissioners of municipalities and the members of the NAC, if any, within the district from among themselves; two persons elected by and from among the members of the Managing Committee of the Central Cooperative Banks; one person nominated by the Bihar Panchayat Parishad: two persons coopted by the Parishad, one each from the scheduled castes and tribes, if their population exceeds five per cent of the population of the district and if such persons are not otherwise members; and three women, if not otherwise elected, are coopted on the Parishad. The Parishad is an entirely non-official body with an Adhyaksha (Chairman) and an Upadhyaksha (Deputy Chairman) elected by the Parishad from among themselves. To give a broad base to Zila Parishad the Tyagi Committee made a proposal to have an additional member of the Panchayat Samiti elected by and from amongst the members of the Samiti.

In spite of the fact that the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act enacted in 1961, no attempt till 1981 was made to make all the three organs of the Panchayati Raj functional and operative. Upto 1973 only Panchayats were allowed to function and there was a committee known as Block Development Committee (BDC) to coordinate the activities of Panchayats under the jurisdiction of a Block with BDO as Chairman. However, during emergency some Panchayat Samitis were created on experimental basis. Only after 1980 State Legislature elections, all the three organs of Panchayati Raj were duly constituted and made effective. (After the passing of Bihar Panchayati Raj Act 1961 Panchayati Raj institutions were introduced in three districts of Bihar, viz.—Patna, Bhagalpur and Dhanbad on experimental basis). During Janta Government elections to Gram Panchayats were held and the Panchayat Samitis were constituted. But when the then Chief Minister of Bihar saw Panchayat Samitis dominated by the forward caste people, for the constitution of Zila Parishad he brought out a bill in state legislature which provided for voting right to the legislators. But before the bill could be passed by the state

legislature, he was removed from the chief ministership and ultimately the bill was withdrawn. As a result the Zila Parishad came into the being only in the last quarter of 1980 when the Congress was voted to power again.

Political Executives

In keeping with the democratic complexion of the Panchayati Raj, in all its tiers the leadership role has been conferred upon non-officials. In this respect, the Bihar Act of 1961 represented a departure from the practice obtaining in Madras and Mysore, where, at least at the district level, officials had been assigned headship. The Mukhiya is elected by the adults of the Panchayat for two, three and five years according to the category of the Panchayat. He may be removed by a majority decision at a meeting of the Executive Committee convened for the purpose. As the chief executive of the Panchayat, the Mukhiya occupies a pivotal position. He is responsible for convening meetings of the Sabha and the Executive Committee, preparation of the Panchayat budget, distribution of business among his colleagues in the executive and nomination of its four members and supervision of the work of the VVF, Panchayat Sevak, and other village level workers. He represents the Panchayat on the Samiti and to the outside world. Although much of his influence depends upon the personality of the incumbent, empirical evidences suggest that certain factors have contributed to increasing his powers and influence in the Panchayat. In the first place, since he has been elevated to the Samiti as a member, he has become more assertive and conscious of his powers. Second, the provision of the nomination of four members of the executive by the Mukhiya provides the latter with an important lever of power to manage the executive according to his whims. Third, owing to the irregular and unsuccessful meetings of the Sabha, it has failed to exercise popular control over the chief executive. Finally, since the members of the executive have been casual and lukewarm towards their duties and unaware of values of participatory democracy in effect, the entire powers and responsibilities have shifted into the hands of the Mukhiya. All these go to make the

office of the Mukhiya one of political potentiality, making him a benevolent despot.

The political executive of the Panchayat Samiti is the Pramukh. In the wake of different development programmes the office of the Pramukh has become the most coveted and prestigious one in the whole of Panchayati Raj system. As has been mentioned earlier, he is elected by the members of the Samiti from among themselves for three years. However, he can be thrown out of power if the Panchayat Samiti passes a vote of no confidence against him by a two third majority. The government also retains the power to remove and suspend the Pramukh, if he refuses to carry out the directives of the government. He may also be removed from the office by the government, if found guilty of misconduct or charges of corruption proved. The powers and influences of the Pramukh stem from the fact that he is head of an executive body of the Panchayati Raj which enjoys too much of power. The Act of 1961 entrusted him with the responsibilities of convening, presiding, and conducting the meetings of the Samiti, inspecting the works undertaken and records maintained by the Panchayats, guiding and tendering advice to the Panchayats, exercising administrative control over the Block Development Officer (BDO), and sending confidential report on the performance and style of functioning of the BDO to the Collector at the end of each financial year. He represents the Samiti on the Zila Parishad as also on the outside world. In case the Pramukh has political links with the State and national leaders, he commands greater influence over the Samiti and Block officials. Sometimes, the local MLA finds in the Pramukh a potential rival.

Although the Zila Parishad in Bihar is an advisory, and coordinating body, the office of the Adhyaksha is the highest elective office in the Panchayati Raj system. He is supposed to be involved in the decisions taken in regard to appointments of the staff of district cadre, their promotions and transfers. He is expected to guide and encourage the Samitis and distribute funds among them. In addition to his routine duties like convening, presiding and conducting the meetings of the Zila Parishad, he exercises control over

its Secretary and Chief Executive Officer. If the office is occupied by a legislator, he wields considerable influence in and outside the Zila Parishad. Till recently most of the Adhyakshas were MLAs. But now the government has taken an informal decision not to allow MLAs to seek election for the post of Adhyaksha. To keep the Adhyaksha under the popular control of the Zila Parishad and to educate its members in Parliamentary democracy, the Tyagi Sub-Committee proposed to relieve him of the responsibility of convening and presiding over the meetings of the Parishad and to entrust these tasks to a permanent Chairman and Vice-Chairman elected, by the Zila Parishad from amongst its members.

Elections

With a view to interlinking the three-tier Panchayati Raj bodies and avoiding the cumbersome process of elections, the method of direct election has been followed only at the Panchayat level. The Mukhiya and the four members of the Executive Committee are elected by the adults living under the jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat. For the purposes of elections of the four members of the executive committee the entire Panchayat has been divided into four wards and each ward has to elect one member of the executive committee. The Bage Sub-Committee recommended that the village executive should consist of nineteen members, sixteen elected and three coopted and the Mukhiya should be elected indirectly by them. The proposed system of electing the Mukhiya indirectly is likely to increase the chance of malpractices in it. The empirical evidences suggest that the smaller the size of the electors, the greater the chances of candidates' resorting to unfair means in elections. As mentioned earlier, on the lines of the recommendations of the Bage Sub-Committee, the state government promulgated an ordinance providing for indirect election of the Mukhiya. But during the short session of State Legislature in September, 1986, the opposition legislators opposed this move tooth and nail and threatened of a state wide movement against this. Ultimately the government had to surrender before the opposition and the ordinance was withdrawn.

The Act of 1961 provides for a Panchayat Samiti with *ex officio*, coopted and associate members. At this level, indirect election is held to the offices of the Pramukh and Uppramukh. Owing partly to the importance of the office and partly to the smallness of the size of its electors, the candidates for these two offices have more often than not resorted to malpractices like bribing, entertaining the electors with drinks on the day of polling, confining the uncertain voters, and using fire-arms. In order to minimise the chances of corrupt practices in the election of the Pramukh, the Committee on the Panchayati Raj elections recommended broad-basing of electors. This recommendation did not, however, find favour with the state government. So far, the mode of electing the Pramukh has not helped to speed up the process of dispersal of rural leadership nor in replacing the tradition-ridden rural elite by a committed, forward-looking one.

There is no provision for direct elections of the members of the Zila Parishad. This is in conformity with the model of a weak Zila Parishad. The Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha are elected by its members from among themselves. Apprehending the use of corrupt practices in the election of the Parishad's Adhyaksha, the Committee on the Panchayati Raj Elections suggested that he be elected by an electoral college consisting of the Pramukh as of the district. The recommendations of the Committee have not been accepted by the state government nor have remedial measures been taken to stop unfair means in elections. This is because none of the political parties are interested in improving the situation. They are simply interested in capturing the office of Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha either by fair or foul means.

The postponement of the Panchayati Raj elections hinders its growth on the right lines. Even in those districts where Panchayati Raj bodies were introduced in 1964, elections have not been held from 1967 at regular intervals. As a result, neither the gradual replacement of the traditional rural leaders by those with more representative and progressive backgrounds nor the dispersal of leadership caused by the rise of "populist politics of competitive radicalism" could take place at a rapid pace. The Bage and the Tyagi

Sub-Committees have, therefore, emphasised the need for regular and uniform Panchayati Raj elections. They have also suggested the creation of a one-man Panchayati Raj Election Commission which would be responsible for conducting such elections and taking all decisions in this regard. Such suggestion also finds place in the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj.

The Committee System

For the better functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions there is provision for both statutory and permissive committees. Under the Act of 1947, the Mukhiya had to classify the business of the Panchayat into eight or more departments like irrigation, watch and ward, education, finance, sanitation, health, communication, etc., and entrust each department to one of the members of the executive assisted by a functional sub-committee. The Sub-Committee used to be consisted of three to five members interested in the subject and used to be drawn from outside. Since then the formation of such Sub-Committees has become a formal affair.

The Act of 1961 provided for committees at the Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Samiti levels so as to create a feeling of involvement among large number of its members, and to create a climate of informality, privacy and thoroughness in the transaction of the works of Panchayati Raj. Accordingly the Panchayat Samiti constitutes eight Standing Committees for agriculture, animal husbandry and co-operation; social education, local arts and crafts; small savings and cottage industries; public health; communication and works; finance and taxation; social welfare; irrigation, and education. With the approval of the Zila Parishad, the Samiti can create more Committees. Save and except the last two, every Committee consists of not less than two and not more than seven members elected by the Samiti from among themselves. The last two Committees consist of the Pramukh, four members of the Samiti, and two officers of the department concerned. The Pramukh is an *ex officio* member of the Committee on finance and taxation. To broad-base its membership, no member is allowed to be in more than two Committees, except the Chairman. Again, except in three

Committees, in which the Pramukh is *ex officio* Chairman, each Committee elects its Chairman from among its members. The Committees have to carry out such functions as are assigned to them by the Samiti from time to time. The Zila Parishad likewise forms eight Standing Committees for planning, community development and communications; agriculture, animal husbandary, cooperation; industries; social welfare; finance and taxation; medical, public health, and relief; education; and irrigation and power. With the approval of the government, the Zila Parishad creates more Committees. The provisions regarding the Committees of the Samiti in terms of organisation and office bearers, etc., supply *mutatis mutandis* to the Committees of the Zila Parishad.

So far performance is concerned, the Committees of the Upper tiers of Panchayati Raj make a definite departure from their counterparts at the Gram Panchayat. The former discusses and scrutinises the business entrusted to them and by and large their recommendations are honoured by the general bodies. But these Committees, in the real sense of the term, have not yet made their impact on the working of the Panchayati Raj. It is because of the fact that instead of taking up business of Panchayats of serious nature, they represent and accommodate the interests of the divergent section of the village community. They act as safety-valves and the matters connected with the execution of development works are taken care of by the rural bureaucracy. Just to strengthen the healthy tradition of the Committee system, it was intended to replace the functional Sub-Committee of the Panchayat by Standing Committees and raising their membership. Since the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad are considered to be much too large to supervise and review the functioning of their Committees, the Tyagi Sub-Committee suggested for the creation of Executive Committees, one each at these two levels, on the pattern of committee system prevailing under Panchayati Raj system in Maharashtra. As per recommendations of Tyagi Committee at the samiti level, it would consist of the Chairman of its Committees with the Pramukh as head and at the Parishad level it would include the Chairman of its Committees and the Adhyaksha as head. As the miniature of Samiti/Parishad and compris-

ing of influential members, enjoying supervisory, reviewing, and coordinating powers over the Committees, the proposed Executive Committees are likely to emerge as the cabinet of the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad respectively providing a focal point of rural leadership.

Personnel

So far the implementation of development programmes through Panchayati Raj is concerned, the Panchayati Raj personnel system may be treated as of significant importance. Much of the success and failure of the Panchayati Raj bodies depends upon the availability of well-equipped staff for sustained work in rural areas. The ability of the staff to work as a team will certainly help in rapport building between the officials and non-officials on the one hand and better implementation of development programmes on the other.

The Panchayat Sevak or Secretary is the only permanent functionary of the Panchayat. He is appointed, after a written and oral examination, by a District Committee headed by the Collector. In 1954, the educational requirement for this post was raised from middle to matriculation examination.

His functions relate to the village judiciary and the executive of the Panchayat, rural development, and revenue collection. However, in recent years his miscellaneous functions are on the increase. He is called upon to prepare and verify the voters' list, ration cards and land records in and outside the Panchayat. What makes his position delicate is that he has to serve too many masters—the Collector, ADM, SDO, BDO, GPS (Gram Panchayat Supervisor), the Mukhiya, and the Sarpanch. It may be regarded as an even situation on any account. The restoration of departmental control over him, as suggested by the Bage Sub-Committee, may strengthen his administrative position.

There is no separate Panchayati Raj service or development service cadre in Bihar for two higher tiers. The officers and workers at the Samiti level can be classified into three broad categories; (i) State, (ii) District, and (iii) Samiti cadres. The BDO and Extension Officers (EOs) belong to the State cadre and they are in the Samiti on deputation. The Secretary and Chief Executive Officer,

popularly known as the BDO, is appointed by the state government from the officers of the rank of deputy collector and some times from the agricultural and Animal Husbandry cadre. A fresh recruit to the State Civil Service gets a pre-service training in revenue, law and order and development administration at the Administrative Training School, Ranchi. As development officers, the BDOs are imparted institutional training along with the non-officials, at the Community Development and Panchayati Raj Training Centre, Ranchi. They are under the administrative control of the Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) and the Assistant Deputy Development Commissioner (ADDC) and the Pramukh. As the Secretary of the Samiti, the BDO prepares and issues its agenda, records its decisions, and operates its funds. As its Executive Officer, he is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Samiti and its Standing Committees, coordinating its programmes, preparing its plan, stimulating the Panchayats and encouraging cooperatives. In recent years the BDOs have been relieved of the burden of revenue administration and a separate functionary called as Circle Officer has been posted at the Block to look into the revenue administration. However, apart from the development administration, the BDO is also incharge of law and order administration.

The EOs of various departments functioning at the block on deputation have been placed under the Samiti. The EOs are imparted periodical departmental training at the sub-division, district, and state levels. The EOs are under the operational control of the BDO and the functional control of their departmental superiors. The EOs are averse to submit administratively to a generalist, the BDO. In the absence of operational control over the EOs, the District Technical Officers are not disposed to supervise and guide them in regard to the departmental part of their work. Besides, being under the political protection of the members of the Samiti, the EOs disdain the administrative control of the BDO and often behave indifferently. The subordinate technical workers, ministerial staff, and teachers of primary and middle schools under the Samiti belong to the district cadre. The workers in this category, except

the teachers are appointed by the DDC from the panel of selected candidates prepared by a Committee constituted for this purpose. The teachers are appointed by the district superintendent of education from a panel of candidates prepared by a Committee of the Parishad. The postings, transfers, and deputation of these workers within the district are done by the DDC in consultation with the Adhyaksha. The workers of Class IV belong to the Samiti cadre. They are appointed by BDO from the panel of candidates prepared by Committee consisting of the Pramukh, the Uppramukh, and the BDO.

Since the passage of the Act of 1961, the staffing pattern of the Parishad has undergone some major structural changes. Till April, 1972 the District Development Officer (DDO), an officer of the rank of Additional District Magistrate, acted as its Secretary. He was under the administrative control of the Collector and the Adhyaksha. The services of few officers like the district engineer, the health and medical officer, district superintendent of education, inspectors of schools, had been placed at the disposal of the Parishad. However, their transfers, postings, promotions, etc., are being decided by their parent departments. As a result, coordinated and integrated development programmes moved at a snail's pace. The Collector, owing partly to his own manifold duties and partly to his being outside the Parishad, could not play the stipulated role of the Collector and Director of the Panchayati Raj and removing obstacles that came in the path of the Parishad. Indeed, while fixing his priority of work, he gave preference to the maintenance of law and order, collection of rent, and other regulatory functions like elections, census, supply of essential commodities, etc., relegating development activities to the background. The pusillanimous Technical Officers, owing to inadequate operational control and supervision exercised by the Collector, paid low priority to the Parishad's work. These officers had to carry out the miscellaneous duties assigned by the Collector a situation which caused anguish to the Panchayati Raj leaders and invited protest from the development departments.

To enable the Panchayati Raj officers to pay undivided

attention to planning, development, and welfare activities, the district administration was restructured in May 1978. Accordingly, the post of a DDC-cum-Chief Executive Officer was created in each Panchayati Raj district. An officer, generally of the IAS cadre, he holds a position equal to the Collector and is under the immediate administrative control of the Divisional Commissioner. Thus, the Collector is replaced and the DDC becomes the coordinator and Chief Executive Officer of the district as far as development administration is concerned. All the officers of the development departments have been placed under the operational control of the DDC. To assist the DDC and to guide and supervise the Samiti administration, two posts of ADDCs have been created. This is intended to give an autonomous base to development administration in the district and free it from the Panchayati Raj. While concluding it may be said that the model of Panchayati Raj system which the state of Bihar has adopted is really very commendable in theory, but in practice it is far from satisfactory. It is because of too much interference by the politicians in the functioning of Panchayati Raj institutions.

GUJARAT

A via-media of Maharashtra and Rajasthan with greater emphasis towards Maharashtra pattern, the Panchayati Raj system in Gujarat was introduced with effect from April 1, 1963 throughout the state at a time. When the state of Gujarat was created in the year 1960 the state government appointed on July 15, 1960, a Committee known as the Democratic Decentralisation Committee, under the chairmanship of Shri Rasiklal Parikh, the then Revenue Minister of the state. The term of reference of the Committee was to suggest a coordinated and detailed programme for democratic decentralisation of the state after taking into the account the performance and achievements of various existing institutions of the state, and recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee on democratic decentralisation. This Committee presented its report at the end of December 1960. The recommendations of the Democratic Decentralisation Committee were accepted by the Gujarat

Government and subsequently the Gujarat Panchayats Act 1961, came into being.

PRESENT STRUCTURE

In pursuance of Gujarat Panchayats Act 1961, a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj was introduced in the State with effect from April, 1, 1961. The Gujarat pattern combines several features of the Maharashtra and the Rajasthan system. The Gujarat Panchayats Act 1961 provided for the establishment of Gram Sabha and Gram/Nagar Panchayats at the village level, Taluka Panchayats at the Taluka level and District Panchayats at the district level. These levels, i.e., Gram/Nagar Panchayat, Taluka Panchayat and Zila Panchayat have been covered in the same Act of 1961 and subsequent enactments from time to time. At present there are 12,067 Gram Panchayats, 184 Panchayat Samities, 59 Nagar Panchayats and 18 District Panchayats in the State.

Gram Panchayat

A Gram Panchayat is established for a local area having population of 500 to 10,000 and is directly elected body. Membership of the Gram Panchayat based on population criteria, varies from nine to fifteen including two women, one or more members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes according to their population. The Sarpanch and Upsarpanch are elected by the members of the Panchayat and they can be removed, if a majority of two-thirds of the members of Panchayat pass a vote of no confidence against them.

Gram Sabhas

The Gram Sabha consists of all the citizens of the village who have the voting right. The Gram Sabha may be treated as an ideal institution of Direct Democracy. The Gram Sabha discusses the annual statement of accounts, annual administration report, programme of works, etc., at its meetings. According to the Act of 1961 two meetings are required to be held every year to consider the budget, audit report, programme, progress and working of the Gram Panchayat.

Nagar Panchayat

A Nagar Panchayat is constituted for a local area having a population of more than 10,000 but not exceeding 20,000. It consists of fifteen to thirty-one members as determined by the District Panchayat on population basis. As in the case of Gram Panchayats, on Nagar Panchayats too seats are reserved for women and scheduled castes/scheduled tribes.

Officers and Servants

For each Gram/Nagar Panchayat there is a Secretary drawn from the district cadre or Talati-Cum-Secretary operated by the District Panchayat. Since the major portion of revenue administration in Gujarat has been transferred to the Panchayats, the Talati has been made secretary of the Panchayat. As Gram Panchayat is an important administrative unit dealing with implementation of rural development programmes, the Parikh Committee felt that unless necessary means, powers and authority are given, it cannot discharge its functions properly and efficiently. The Panchayat can also appoint other officers and servants after obtaining sanction for the creation of the posts from the Development Commissioner.

Nyaya Panchayat

With a view to provide cheaper and speedy justice to a common villager, the Nyaya Panchayat and the conciliation panchayats are also constituted under the Act with statutory powers to try certain offences. But it could be noted that the weakest link under Panchayati Raj system in Gujarat is the Nyaya Panchayat which on the whole has not been very effective. Unfortunately, no effort has been made so far to strengthen it.

Taluka Panchayat

In pursuance of the recommendations of the Mehta Team, most of the States made the block the basic unit for the planning and execution of different development programmes. Accordingly, most developmental functions were entrusted to the Samitis/Taluka Panchayat for execution. In Gujarat, the middle-tier is known as the Taluka Panchayat. The Taluka

Panchayat is a body corporate comparable to the Panchayat Samiti in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan with its independent functions, resources and staff. It is, however, subordinate to the District Panchayat and is constituted for every revenue Taluka (Tahsil) excluding the Municipal areas.

The Taluka Panchayat which is indirectly elected, consists of the following members:

1. *Ex officio members*—Sarpanchas of the Gram Panchayats and the Chairmen of the Nagar Panchayats.
2. *Elected members*—Members elected by the Chairman of the Co-operative Societies in the taluka from amongst themselves, whose number is about one-tenth of the total number of Sarpanchas and Chairmen.
3. *Co-opted members*—Two women interested in welfare activities of women and children, two representatives each of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and two social workers possessing experience in rural development are co-opted on Taluka Panchayat.
4. *Associate members*—Local MLAs, Presidents of Municipalities, local members of the District Panchayat and the mamlatdar are the associate members of the Taluka Panchayat.

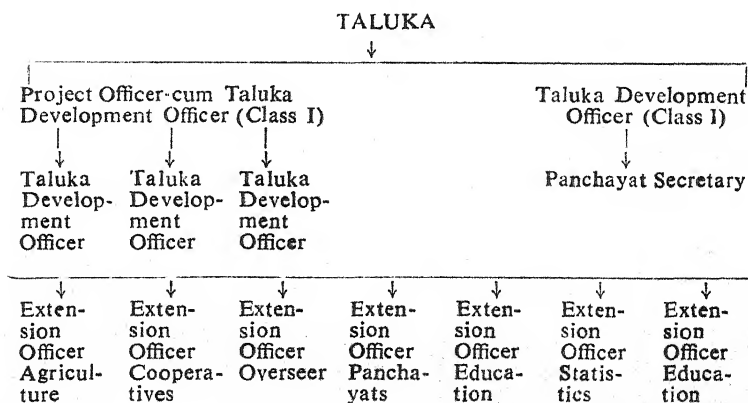
The President and Vice President are elected by the *ex officio* elected and coopted members of the Taluka Panchayats from among themselves.

In regard to the functions of the Taluka Panchayats, it may be mentioned that the Taluka Panchayat in Gujarat is entrusted with the planning and execution of agricultural programmes and works, the timely and equitable distribution of inputs and the full use of water available under irrigation schemes. The obligatory functions of Taluka Panchayats relate to subjects like sanitation, health, education, culture, social education, community development, public works, agriculture, forest, animal husbandry, village and cottage industries, cooperation, Harijan welfare, women's welfare, planning rural housing, relief and pastures, etc. Taluka Panchayats also perform a number of discretionary functions

relating to health, safety, education, comfort, etc., of the inhabitants.

In Gujarat, an officer of the State Service called TDO is posted to work as *ex officio* Secretary of the Taluka Panchayat. He is designated as the Taluka Development Officer. The other officers working under the Taluka Panchayat include staff of the former local bodies, *i.e.*, district local board/district school board, posted at the taluka level and the state service personnel entrusted to the District Panchayat by the government for activities to be carried out at the taluka level. The Taluka Panchayat has the powers to appoint such other staff as may be considered necessary by it for discharging its functions and duties.

STAFFING PATTERN AT TALUKA LEVEL



At the district level there is Zila Panchayat which enjoys wide executive power having a large annual budget and enjoys a high degree of autonomy in planning. The Zila Panchayat is basically an elective body whose functionaries are partly directly and partly indirectly elected. It consists of:

1. *Ex officio* members : Presidents of all Taluka Panchayats in the district.

2. *Elected members :*

(a) One person elected by each constituent Taluka Panchayat; and

(b) Such number of other members to be directly elected, as may be decided by the government (not exceeding in number to the total number of seats of *ex officio* members and of those elected by Taluka Panchayats). Two of the seats intended for directly elected members are reserved for women; one or more seats for Scheduled Castes and one or more for Scheduled Tribes according to the population, if it is not less than 5 per cent.

3. *Coopted members :* Two persons having experience in the field education and residing in the district; and

4. *Associate members :* Local MPs and MLAs, the District Collector and Presidents of all Municipalities in the district.

The President and Vice-President of the District Panchayat are elected by the members from among themselves. The District Panchayat is vested with wide administrative and executive powers. The details of the functions and duties of District Panchayats find place in the Appendix of the Gujarat Panchayat Act 1961. The Act also provides for the transfer of functions of the various departments of the government to the Zila Panchayat. It has been specially laid down that the Government might transfer the functions of the following departments of the state to the District Panchayat:

1. Agriculture,
2. Animal Husbandry,
3. Cooperative Department,
4. Cottage Industries and Small Scale Industries,
5. Family Planning,
6. Land Department,
7. Prohibition Department, particularly, Prohibition Propaganda,
8. District Statistical Department,
9. Public Health and Medical Department,

10. Public Health in general,
11. PWD and Irrigation activities in the district, and
12. Social Welfare.

While the Panchayats accord administrative approval and sanction grants in aid upto a certain limit, the powers of technical approval to works and schemes have been given to Technical Officers at different levels. Schemes which benefit individual districts are classified as District Plan schemes. After the establishment of the Panchayati Raj, many of the district level plan schemes were transferred to the District Panchayats for implementation. Such schemes fall into two categories, viz. : (a) schemes retained by the government, and (b) schemes transferred to the Panchayats. One of the important functions of Zila Panchayats in Gujarat relates to the recruitment of Class III and IV staff for different categories of posts. There is a Gujarat Panchayat Service Selection Board, consisting of three members (including the Chairman) for selecting candidates for recruitment to the posts in the Panchayat Service and for considering questions of Panchayat Service as may be referred to it by the government.

There is a District Panchayat Service Selection Committee in each district, consisting of one member of the State Panchayat Service Selection Board (nominated by the Chairman of the Board), the President of the District Panchayat and one officer nominated by the government.

The rules made by the government specify the posts to which recruitment would be made by the state and the District Selection Bodies. An officer of the State Service is posted to function as the *ex officio* Secretary of the District Panchayat, and is designated as the District Development Officer. The other officers of the District Panchayat include such of those who have been posted to work under the District Panchayat and those who have been allotted or transferred to the Panchayat service.

Since the entire development work in Gujarat has been entrusted to the district bodies, the staff engaged in such work is directly under the control of Zila Panchayat. For the revenue work, there is a Deputy District Development

Officer. He also deals with the establishment matters in the Panchayat. In Gujarat the Collector/District Magistrate has to play only a formal role in the functioning of Zila Panchayat. He is not very deeply involved in the District Panchayat as in many other States, though he is made an associate member of the District Panchayat and has number of functions to perform with regard to elections to the Village Panchayats, giving of sanctions to lease, sales and transfer of properties vested in the Gram/Nagar Panchayats.

The Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat (DDO) is an IAS officer of status of the Collector, and in certain cases he is senior in service to the Collector of the district. With the transfer of many departmental schemes to the Panchayati Raj bodies a large number of district level functionaries have been transferred to the District Panchayat, such as the District Agriculture Officer, the District Health Officer, the District Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Executive Engineer PWD in respect of works transferred to the Panchayats. The Collector is no longer responsible for a major part of the development activities in the district except that he is the *ex officio* Chairman of District Planning Board. The Collector is required only to watch the implementation of the schemes (those retained by the government) while the district panchayats have to look after the implementation of the plan schemes transferred to them. The Collector, being a member of the Zila Panchayat, is a beneficiary in matters of general coordination. However, it is the President of Zila Panchayat who is in commanding position and rules without any interference from the district level bureaucracy. In reality, the Zila Panchayats in Gujarat have assumed the form of miniature District Governments. Being an apex district body in the Panchayati Raj System it has powers of supervision and control over the lower tiers, i.e., the Taluka, Gram and Nagar Panchayats.

A close study of Section Nos. 157 and 158 would reveal that the functions of the District Panchayat extend over almost the entire gamut of rural life and rural administration. It has virtually become the hub of political and developmental activities at the district level. People wait upon the President of Zila Panchayat to find favour. He enjoys almost the same

position which a minister enjoys at the state level.

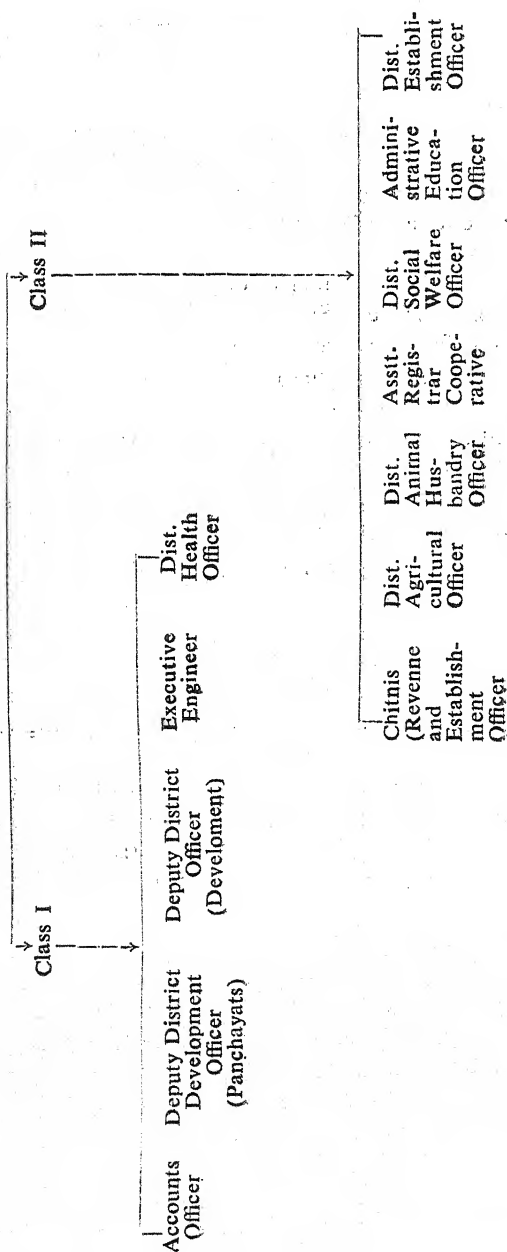
Political Executives

The Panchayati Raj fostered the emergence of a definite new leadership in rural areas. Political enlightenment amongst the people as well as leaders in Gujarat is quite high. The Panchayati Raj set-up in Gujarat has been, by and large, able to attract leaders of a high calibre in terms of their experience in administration, public life, and their records of social service. Since the Panchayats are vested with substantial financial and administrative powers and enjoy high prestige, the institutions are able to attract dynamic leadership. To illustrate the point, it can be said that the post of a Taluka Panchayat President is regarded as being equivalent to that of an MLA, in the scales of values of non-officials. Similarly, in all probability an aspiring leader would prefer being the President of a District Panchayat to being a Member of Parliament. As a result, the political executives in the State have been able to display a better sense of responsibility, more balanced judgement and have shown adequate regard for officials as well as for the principles of administration. It may be noted that the Panchayati Raj leadership has been able in inspiring confidence in officials.

The emergence of the strong rural leadership in Gujarat may be attributed to certain healthy conventions. In the larger areas of Gujarat, there used to be strong non-official element in the administration even before the introduction of the Panchayati Raj. Before 1957, in the Saurashtra State, there was a tendency towards personal administration, when the Ministers in their enthusiasm to solve legal problems, preferred to take on the spot decisions based on the advice of the non-official workers. The absence of a tradition of impersonal administration by civil servants as in British India also helped in strengthening these new conventions.

It would be clear from the reading of Sections 71 and 143 (and the corresponding Sections 59 and 102 for the Taluka Panchayat) that the supremacy of the President in the administration of the Zila Panchayat is established beyond doubt. The wording of the Sections reveals the intention

STAFFING PATTERN AT DISTRICT LEVEL
District Development Officer (Generally IAS)



of the legislature which probably wanted to make the President the effective head of the Panchayat, but at the same time wanted to leave the administration in the hands of the Chief Executive Officer. Though the Taluka Development Officer has the discretion to tender advice, he has to implement the decisions and directions of the President of the Panchayat. Political stability has been the positive factor which has enabled these rural elites to act with more confidence and resist any unreasonable pressures either from their supporters or other non-officials. It has strengthened their hands and put them in a position to obtain cooperation or consent or even the acquiescence of the officers without much trouble.

It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of the Taluka Panchayats and almost all the Zila Panchayats have been continuously under the control of the same political party which was in power at the State level until the President's Rule. However, when the present study was conducted in the middle of 1984, the situation was quite different as no political party had a hold on a particular Taluka Panchayat or District Panchayat. Even then it was encouraging to note that political parties had spread their tentacles in Panchayat arena and elections to Panchayati Raj bodies used to be held on party lines. An empirical study conducted in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh by P.R.R. Sinha and S.P. Jain reveals that the interaction with the Panchayat leaders and especially with the elected President of the Taluka Panchayat in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu was highest, followed by Andhra. The extent of the support rendered by the non-officials to programmes initiated by the officials was also studied. But the officials, in general, were reluctant to recognise the role of the elected leaders in their functions. One leader of a Gujarat Block reported that "when the officials found some difficulty in achieving the target set out by the Agriculture Department, they approached the village leader". In addition, they helped the villages in getting their work done by other departments without much inconvenience to the villagers. For example, they could obtain electricity connection for the Panchayat areas without much delay. The role of the Panchayat

Presidents and Sarpanches has demonstrated that popular leadership can utilise the services of the officials and technical men who are generally bogged down by bureaucratic procedures. This is mainly because only in Maharashtra and Gujarat, have the non-officials been vested with required powers and resources.

Committees

The implementation of plans and development programmes by the three tiers of Panchayati Raj has necessitated the creation of the Committee system. At the village level, the formation of Committees is discretionary, while in the Nagar Panchayats, two Committees are compulsory. It is discretionary for the Nagar Panchayats to form other Committees not exceeding three. The term of these committees is two years from the date of their formation.

The Taluka Panchayat is required by law to form two Committees, *viz.*, a production committee and an Executive Committee. In addition, the Taluka Panchayat has discretion to constitute other Committees not exceeding five. The term of the Committees is two years from the date of their formation. The number of members of the Executive Committee is fixed by the Taluka Panchayat which should not exceed eleven and in the case of other Committees, the number should not exceed seven. The Committees enjoy only those powers and perform those functions which are assigned to them by the Taluka Panchayat. The President of the Taluka Panchayat is the Chairman of the Executive Committees and the members of other Committees elect their own Chairman. The Taluka Development Officer functions as the Secretary of the Executive Committee and the Extension Officers as Secretaries of their respective Committees. The following are the Committees functioning in the Taluka Panchayats:

1. Education Committee,
2. Production Committee,
3. Public Works Committee,
4. Health Committee,
5. Cooperation Committee, and

6. Social Welfare Committee and Executive Committee.

A District Panchayat has two types of committees, viz., mandatory and discretionary. The mandatory committees are the Education Committee, the Public Works Committee, the Production Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Appeal Committee. The term of the Production, Executive and Public Works Committees is two years, whereas the term of the Education and the Appeal Committees is coextensive with the district Panchayat. The Education Committee has some special features. It consists of eleven members elected by the district Panchayat from amongst its own members.

These members possessing the prescribed educational qualifications are to be coopted from amongst the persons residing in the district. The Appeal Committee consists of the President of the District Panchayat and two members chosen from amongst its own members with the former acting as the Chairman. The Committee hears appeals from the decisions of the subordinate panchayats. The Committee's decision is deemed to be the decision of the District Panchayat.

To conclude, it may be said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat exercise their powers in real sense of the term and have come to be recognised as effective institutions of grassroots democracy, whereas in Bihar their powers remain on the paper and they are never allowed by the State Government to exercise their powers effectively. As such they have yet to struck their roots. □

CHAPTER III

PERCEPTION OF NON-OFFICIALS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ BUREAUCRACY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the present chapter, we attempt to present the awareness of non-officials, viz., community leaders in regard to Panchayati Raj Institutions, Bureaucratic Set-up and different Rural Development Programmes. Side by side we have also attempted to analyse and assess the perception of non-officials about the functioning of Panchayati Raj and Bureaucracy. The views expressed in the present chapter are based on the opinion expressed by community leaders to our printed questionnaire.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

First of all we wanted to know whether the Panchayati Raj representatives know about the democratic decentralisation and recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. It is heartening to note that 75 per cent of the total respondents in Bihar and 81 per cent in Gujarat knew about democratic decentralisation. Encouraged by such a high response, we made a deeper query as to what they meant by democratic decentralisation and what were the main recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee? Surprisingly we were discouraged to note that a very insignificant number of the community leaders in both the states provided the details. By democratic decentralisation they simply meant diffusion of authority and decentralisation of power at the grassroots level. They didn't know what is the required population for constituting a Gram Panchayat. They also didn't know about the rules of business of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the powers given to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Janata Government constituted Asoka Mehta Committee to go into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and to

recommend ways and means to strengthen the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Since it was the report of a Committee constituted in recent past, we wanted to ascertain as to whether the Panchayati Raj representatives were aware of it. It was disappointing and frustrating to note that only 43 per cent respondents in Bihar and 49 per cent respondents in Gujarat replied in positive. Majority of them expressed their ignorance and unawareness. This leads us to conclude that the Panchayati Raj representatives were not interested in knowing about innovative information about the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They were stereotype, and were interested in completing their term of office as their predecessors did. This also leads us to observe that they hardly used to go through the literatures on the Panchayati Raj, supplied by the state and central government from time to time. This further suggests that they were little interested in knowing about the parliamentary procedures and constitutional means of functioning of grassroots democracy. However, a line may be added here that the state governments should have supplied the documents to the Chairmen of Zila Parishad/Zila Panchayat at its own cost. Not only the Report of Asoka Mehta Committee, but all documents concerning Panchayati Raj and Rural Development should be supplied to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Those, who replied in positive that they knew about the Asoka Mehta Committee Report, were put to another query as to what were the main recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee? But a dismal response was obtained from such respondents, 95 per cent of such respondents gave only this much of information that they heard that a committee under the chairmanship of Asoka Mehta was appointed by the Janata Government to go into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. But didn't know what were the recommendations of the committee. Only the chairman and vice-chairman of Zila Panchayat of Ahmedabad (Gujarat) and the President of Zila Parishad and a few members of Zila Parishad, Patna (Bihar) said that they knew about the recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee. They explained that the main emphasis of the committee report was on having a two-tier system, i.e., Mandal Panchayat and Zila Parishad

instead of existing three-tier system. They further pointed out that committee has also recommended to involve the Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural development programmes. The emphasis of report was also on strengthening the Nyaya Panchayat and making provision for monthly salaries to Nyaya Panchas. The committee has also recommended to adopt the cluster approach for rural development. These were some of the information supplied by the above mentioned category of respondents in regard to Asoka Mehta Committee Report. In the final analysis it may be said that a negligible percentage of respondents had the awareness of Asoka Mehta Committee. It is really discouraging picture so far sustenance of participatory democracy is concerned.

There is a talk everywhere that the Panchayati Raj Institutions have not achieved their goals. As such we wanted to know what the Panchayati Raj representatives felt about this statement. Twelve per cent respondents of Bihar and 16 per cent respondents of Gujarat reported that Panchayati Raj Institutions have fully achieved their goal whereas 72 per cent and 62 per cent respondents of Bihar and Gujarat respectively informed that these institutions have partially achieved their goals. It is striking to note that in comparison to 2 per cent of respondents of Gujarat, 15 per cent respondents of Bihar reported that the Panchayati Raj Institutions have not achieved their goal at all. On comparison it looks clear that according to respondents of Gujarat, the performance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions had been quite encouraging. Only 2 per cent of respondents did not share this view. However, higher percentage of dissatisfaction in Bihar may be attributed to the fact that the general villagers and community leaders of Bihar were more politically conscious in comparison to Gujarat as such they were quick to point out the weaknesses of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. This was observed in the course of field study.

We put another question, which was directly related to their leadership functioning, that how they discharge their duties—by proxy/by active involvement or/by keeping people in confidence. On this point too we found the difference in the style of functioning of leadership in Bihar and Gujarat. While 31 per cent Panchayati Raj leaders of Bihar admitted

that they discharged their duty by proxy, only 7 per cent of Gujarat respondents shared this view. Again while 71 per cent Bihar Panchayati Raj leaders admitted that either they discharged their duties by keeping people in confidence or by actively involving them; percentage of as high as 93 per cent of Gujarat community leaders expressed the views that they were honest to their duty and never believed in proxy. They said that when the general masses had reposed their confidence in them, it was the duty of the leadership to keep the general masses in confidence and discharge the duties honestly. This also explains the fact that the Bihar leadership tried to help its supporters and exploited the benefits for their personal ends. And as such, they might not be keeping people in confidence. Since they tried to please the dominant sections of the society and keep the local level bureaucracy in confidence by giving them small tips, the leadership might be discharging its duties by proxy. This is not our personal observation rather it is based on the opinion expressed by the cross-sections of the society with whom the research team had an informal talk.

Just to read the reaction of the Panchayati Raj leaders we made a statement that Panchayati Raj was like a 'God that failed' and as such Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped. In reply to our this statement only 12 per cent of leadership of Bihar and 11 per cent of Gujarat stated that the Panchayati Raj has failed in its goal and it should be scrapped. A high majority of leadership of both Bihar and Gujarat stated that the Panchayati Raj has not failed in its objectives. It was doing good job and it should continue. They further said that the Panchayati Raj was the nursery of democracy and integral part of our larger political system. If this institution continues, it may prove to be a best training ground for higher level politicians. They said that most of the national leaders of pre-independence era started their careers at municipal and local level. It has a good educative value in the democratic process and political development in the country.

We observed that only those leaders in both the states expressed the view that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped. It were those respondents who were either opposition members or who were not satisfied with

the style of functioning of dominant groups.

In regard to the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions, we put a question whether the Panchayati Raj representatives knew about the code of conduct which they were supposed to observe and whether they observed. In reply to our this question a mixed response was obtained from both the states, 70 per cent of Bihar leaders stated that they knew about the code of conduct and 62 per cent of them said that they observed it. As against this 60 per cent Gujarat leaders said that they knew about the code of conduct and 56 per cent admitted that they observed it. Remaining respondents of both the states stated that they didn't know about the code of conduct and hence the question of observance did not arise.

However, when we asked them to list some of the code of conduct which they were supposed to observe, none of the respondents of both the states mentioned about them. This clearly reflects that the leadership was not aware of the code of conduct but replied in affirmative just to impress upon the research team that they were enlightened leaders.

BUREAUCRATIC SET-UP

In a democratic set-up it is of great importance as to how the leaders of public opinion approach the government official for solving the problems of general masses. It is more important for rural areas where officials are treated as the top brass of the society. As such we were curious to know as to how rural leaders approach the government officials to get some work of public importance done. We gave four options, *i.e.*, sending a letter, personal meeting, meeting in a delegation and reminding the official on telephone. Since these four options are not independently sufficient in themselves, it is natural that the leaders may choose more than one method. Accordingly, they informed us that the leaders utilised more than one method to approach the officials to get the public works done. However, they pointed out that personal meeting and reminding the official by letter proved to be more effective method.

Closely connected to this, we put a related question to

the leaders as to how much concern officials have for community leaders. In this connection, it is striking to note that while 71 per cent community leaders of Gujarat expressed the view that officials felt very much concerned about the leaders, only 45 per cent the Bihar Panchayati Raj leaders shared that opinion. While 45 per cent Bihar leaders said that the officials were somewhat concerned, 26 per cent Gujarat Panchayati Raj representatives shared this view. Again it is disappointing to note that 10 per cent of the Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives said that officials were not at all concerned about the leadership.

One conclusion may be drawn from the above statements that the local bureaucracy in Gujarat gave due weight to the Panchayati Raj leaders. And as such, they may be termed as committed bureaucrats. But in case of Bihar, it may be said that the bureaucracy was either not-committed or due to factional fight among the leaders, they hardly cared for the community leaders. The last statement was found to be more correct in the opinion of the cross section of Bihar rural society.

In recent years there is a general feeling as also reported in newspapers that the local level bureaucracy enters into some sort of collusion with local level politicians and both of them heartlessly exploit the ignorant rural masses. It is also said that local level officials, for getting protection for their wrongful deeds, maintain good relations with local community leaders. Whenever they were in trouble they approached the Panchayati Raj leaders for their protection. As such, we put a question to the Panchayati Raj representatives as to 'whether officials approach them for seeking favour?' 'If so, how often?' In reply to this question it is interesting to note that 43 per cent Gujarat Panchayati Raj representatives said that officials frequently approach them for favour. Only 18 per cent Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives expressed such views. This further supports our viewpoints mentioned earlier that 71 per cent officials of Gujarat felt concerned about Panchayati Raj representatives. This approves of the fact that either the Panchayati Raj representatives and local level officials in Gujarat have some mutual working understanding or they have entered into some sort of collusion.

It may be also due to the fact that Panchayat Samiti members in Gujarat are in powerful position and they use to get officials transferred from their areas if the officials do not give weight to their demands and requests. Again only 53 per cent Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives said that officials approached them for favour sometimes and that too when they were in trouble. But this view was expressed by more than 62 per cent Panchayati Raj representatives of Gujarat. On the whole it may be said that for public consumption politicians used to criticise the local level bureaucracy and *vice versa*. But, the fact remains that they have good mutual understanding.

When we asked the officials of both the states as to 'whether the Panchayati Raj representatives put undue pressure?', an overwhelming majority of officials of both the states stated that the Panchayati Raj representatives always put pressures on them for some personal work or to help their supporters. For cross-checking we put the same problem before the Panchayati Raj representatives as to 'whether they put pressures on the local level bureaucracy?' After scoring the statements of both the sets of respondents a contradictory picture emerged. It can be seen that while 37 per cent of Bihar respondents admitted that they put undue pressures on local level bureaucracy, only 17 per cent Panchayati Raj representatives of Gujarat shared this view. On a second query too, we found a contradictory picture. When we asked the officials (see in succeeding chapter) 'whether they succumbed to the pressures of Panchayati Raj representatives', they admitted that in most of the cases they had to succumb. But when we put the same query to the Panchayati Raj representatives, 13 per cent of Bihar and 30 per cent of Gujarat representatives admitted that officials succumb to their pressures. However, majority of them said that just to make an excuse of their folly, the local level bureaucracy put blames that the Panchayati Raj representatives pressurise them.

The performance of democratic system largely depends on the quality of leadership which is at the helm of affairs. If leadership is energetic, enthusiastic, selfless, and committed, the performance is bound to be good. At the present

moment at every turn there is a hue and cry for young and better leaders. As such, we wanted to know whether the Panchayati Raj representatives were alive to leadership qualities. In this regard, the reply of the Panchayati Raj representatives may be summarised in following manner. The leadership should be polished, soft-spoken, and should have the constant contact with the general masses as well as officials. They should be above partisan feelings and should love the feelings of others. In rural areas it is highly essential that the leadership should take more care of the interests of downtrodden, poor, and weaker sections of the society. They should be honest, hard working and be always ready to solve the difficulties of the people of the area. They should be cooperative, dedicated and impartial. They should be above narrow considerations like caste, creed, Mohalla, etc. There should not be any gap between what they say and what they do. They must fulfil the promises which they make before the public at the time of election. They should be assimilative, development oriented and vigilant. They should always try to please the constituents not by lip service but by actions. They should have a unique combination of qualities of both head and heart. Instead of being idealistic, the leaders should be pragmatic in approach and be conversant with rules and regulations. Whatever authority is at their command, they should utilise it properly. They should stand behind their constituents at the time of need and calamities. In the opinion of the sample respondents of both the states these are some of the qualities which a leader must possess. We personally feel that the qualities mentioned by the respondents are realistic. But what is required that the leaders should follow those qualities in their practical life which is absent at the present moment.

After assessing their views on leadership qualities, we wanted to know whether the Panchayati Raj representatives were satisfied with the existing powers and functions assigned to Panchayati Raj Institutions. In reply to this question, the Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states, *i.e.*, Bihar and Gujarat said that they were not happy with the powers and functions given to the Panchayati Raj bodies. The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the

states pointed out that the existing powers and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions were mostly regulatory in nature and they had not been assigned any role to play in development programmes. The Panchayati Raj representatives of Bihar pointed out that what to speak of development works they were not allowed to perform even the regulatory functions. They further said that if some outsider goes through the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, he will have the impression that the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Bihar have the largest power in India. But if read carefully one will find that what has been given by one hand has been snatched by another. They said that MLAs never liked that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should get more powers because they were afraid of the fact that through their good work, the Panchayati Raj representatives may prove to be their potential rivals in future. As such, MLAs always tried that no such legislations should be passed which makes the Panchayati Raj representatives powerful. For example, they said that after mentioning the powers and functions of the Act, it has been clearly written that "Subject to Legislative changes made from time to time". This proves beyond doubts the non-serious attitude of the state legislature towards powers and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

On the other hand, the Panchayati Raj representatives of Gujarat had nothing to say like this. Rather they pointed out that whatever powers and functions had been given to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat, without any state interference they were free to exercise. However, they said that more powers should be given to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states mentioned that management of primary education, construction of village road, irrigation work, relief work, provision for drinking water, minor irrigation, maintenance and supervision of tube-wells, etc., should be exclusively put at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They further suggested that the field staff of different departments should work under the supervision and administrative control of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Closely connected to this, we wanted to know whether

the Panchayati Raj Institutions had sufficient fund (finance) at their disposal. The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states were almost unanimous of the view that finances were not sufficient at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They said that due to the lack of fund the Panchayati Raj Institutions were unable to take up any development work. Citing an example, they said that the primary school buildings in their respective states and respective panchayats were in very bad shape. But they could not get them repaired due to the shortage of fund. As such, they suggested that something immediately be done to raise the finances of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, so that they could function as the viable units of grassroots democracy.

After recording their impressions about the finances, we put another query that if finances were not adequate what strategy they would like to suggest to improve the financial condition of the Panchayati Raj Institutions? The first thing suggested by the Panchayati Raj representatives of both Bihar and Gujarat was to make arrangements of statutory grants for the Panchayati Raj Institutions by the state governments. In this connection it may be suggested that like Great Britain the Panchayati Raj Institutions be given some definite amount as contribution grant by the state government. In that case they may be in a position to prepare their plan keeping in view the grants available to them. In absence of any statutory grant, the Panchayati Raj Institutions were not in a position to draw their annual action plan. The Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives mentioned that like Gujarat and Maharashtra, if not 100 per cent at least 50 per cent of land revenues, which are collected by the Panchayati Raj Institutions, should go to them. At the present moment only 25 per cent of the collected revenue goes to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They said that if this was done it would serve two purposes. First, it would be helping the Panchayati Raj Institutions in raising their financial resources and secondly, it would motivate them to be particular in collecting the land revenue in time.

To raise the revenue of the Panchayati Raj Institutions

the respondents suggested that settlement of Jalkars (fishery ponds) should be exclusively left at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In regard to implementation of development programmes certain percentage of contracts should also be given to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They be also permitted to levy taxes on haats, bullock-carts, bicycles. In this connection it may be pointed out that even at the present moment, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been empowered to levy taxes but, the reasons best known to them, they are not in a position to levy and collect such taxes. And they be given statutory powers to punish the defaulters, who did not pay the taxes in time. They suggested that by adopting such methods the financial position of the Panchayati Raj Institutions could be improved.

We observed that in Gujarat, elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions were fought on party lines. Though political parties did not enter into election arena formally, they put up their candidates and campaign for them. But in Bihar, elections are not fought on party lines. As such, we put a query before the respondents of both the states as to whether political parties should be allowed to enter into the election arena? It is encouraging to note that respondents of both the states said that when political parties used to act behind the scene at the time of Panchayati Raj elections, why they should not be allowed to appear on election scene in their formal capacity. They further suggested that, based on the recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee, some statutory provision be made and political parties may be allowed to participate in local elections in their formal capacity.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In recent years there is much discussion about involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions with rural development programmes. It is felt that without active involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, we cannot achieve full success in implementation of development programmes. As such, we wanted to know from the people's representatives as to whether Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform regula-

tory functions or be actively involved with development tasks? In this respect the reply of respondents was quite interesting. Only 8 per cent Bihar respondents and 3 per cent Gujarat respondents said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform only regulatory functions whereas 25 per cent Bihar respondents and 26 per cent Gujarat respondents replied that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform only development functions. A majority of as high as 66 per cent (Bihar) and 71 per cent (Gujarat) respondents said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform development and regulatory functions both.

Closely connected to this, we asked another question to the Panchayati Raj representatives that what mode of participation they would like to suggest for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in development works? In reply to this question the respondents of both Bihar and Gujarat gave more than one answer. The most important of them were: location of priority areas, identification of opportunities, identification of beneficiaries, and monitoring and evaluation. It is heartening to note that the perception of respondents of both the states were quite significant in the sense that these were the real aspects of rural development programmes in which participation of people's representatives was highly sought for.

In the context of rural development programmes, the first government official who directly comes into the contact of people is the VLW. As such, we wanted to know whether the VLW was helpful and cooperative to the general masses in general and people's representatives in particular. In response to our this question 56 per cent Bihar and 78 per cent of Gujarat respondents stated that VLWs were found to be quite cooperative. The percentage of Gujarat respondents was quite high in comparison to Bihar. It may be due to the fact that in Gujarat VLWs have been assigned only two tasks, *i.e.*, showing audio-visuals (Documentary Films prepared by the Films Division) to the rural masses on development programmes, family planning, etc., and secondly, giving propaganda to new agricultural programmes. Since their role in Gujarat is quite limited, the people's representatives might be satisfied with their performance. But in Bihar

VLWs have been given a wide range of functions and as such, might not be discharging their all the functions with equal efficiency. This may be the reason that the Bihar representatives might not be highly satisfied with the performance of VLWs. The second reason may be that due to lighter control from above, the VLWs might be indifferent towards their duties.

In regard to development programmes it is universally accepted that the success or failure depends on administrative efficiency, channel of communication and active involvement of the community and their representatives. Our concern was to know about such dynamics of development programmes as to whether they were satisfactory. First, of all we wanted to know about administrative delay *vis-a-vis* administrative inefficiency. The scores on this point were quite contradictory in the background of other statements given by the sample respondents of both the states. It was more contradictory in case of Gujarat because of the fact that to our earlier queries the people's representatives were not so much critical of government officials but in regard to administrative inefficiency as many as 71 per cent people's representative said that development works are delayed and not properly implemented due to administrative inefficiency. But on another item, *i.e.*, channel of communication 58 per cent Gujarat respondents replied that the channel of communication between local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj representatives was highly satisfactory. This contradictory picture leads us to conclude that the respondents either did not understand the meaning of our query or they wanted to put the blame on the local level bureaucracy for nonfulfilment of targets. In case of Bihar also a contradictory picture emerged as 59 per cent respondents referred to administrative inefficiency, only 14 per cent mentioned that the channel of communication between the local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj representatives was highly satisfactory. Majority of them mentioned that it was not satisfactory. When asked why there was inefficiency on the part of government officials and dissatisfactory channel of communication between the two? fifty-six per cent Bihar respondents and 55 per cent Gujarat respon-

dents replied that it was because of the fact that local level bureaucracy functioned in complete isolation and never consulted the general public and for that purpose even the people's representatives. They further explained that if local level bureaucracy takes people's representatives into the confidence it may be benefited by the valuable suggestions of people's representatives which may accelerate the pace of implementation of development programmes. This leads us to conclude that by and large, the relationship between the local level bureaucracy and people's representatives in both the states was not cordial. This may also lead the researcher to get the impression that for public consumption the local level bureaucracy and people's representatives may criticise each other publicly but they might have some secret and underhand understanding which does not allow the general masses to share the fruits of development programmes. Based on the findings of previous researches and our own experience of earlier studies, it may be suggested that the second observation was more realistic. However, it is only an observation which is not based on definite evidences. However, since observation is one of the scientific methods of empirical enquiry, our observation may be true to a great extent.

After putting the fixed answer questions, we posed some suggestive problems before the Panchayati Raj leaders in regard to involvement of people's representatives in development programmes. Their opinions in this regard are given below.

The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states suggested that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should take up the village and area development programmes on priority basis. The selection of programmes should be based on the basic needs of the area in general and village in particular. If so many development works come on priority list, the Panchayati Raj Institutions should select those programme from the priority list which required immediate attention. They further suggested that if development works are allotted to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the entire cost of the programme or project should be put at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in implementation of the

scheme the local level bureaucracy should provide only technical assistance. At the same time they may also monitor the implementation of programme by going to the site of the project. They further suggested that while selecting the development programmes the people's representatives should not take any independent view, rather they should take the people of the village and area in confidence and in consultation with the general public, the programme should be selected and implemented. They were also of the view that while selecting and implementing the development programmes, they should not adopt sectoral approach rather should try for the integrated approach to development based on area development programmes.

As regards planning and execution of development programmes in rural areas, they were of the view that neither the bureaucracy nor the Panchayati Raj Institutions could discharge the duties efficiently alone as such there should be mutual cooperation between the two. And while planning for development programme, they should sit together and finalise the work.

The most important duty of the Panchayati Raj representative in regard to rural development programmes should be to educate the general masses. They suggested that in spite of more than 35 years of independence the increase in literacy rate in rural areas had been very slow. The rural masses were still fatalist and traditional minded. Majority of them were not even prepared to adopt to modern means of farming and modern agricultural technology. Due to their illiteracy and ignorance, they did not know even about different schemes introduced by the government for their benefit. As such, the most important development task, left at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj representatives, was to develop the rural masses socially, politically, economically and educationally. They should educate the rural masses about the different rural development programmes introduced by the government and encourage them to come forward to share the benefits of such programmes. They further suggested that they may work hard in the direction of rural industrialisation. If village and cottage industries were given encouragement, it may

not only reduce the problem of unemployment but it may also help in bringing the poor masses above the poverty line.

If one looks into the suggestions put forward by the Panchayati Raj representatives in regard to rural development programmes, he may get this impression that the Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states were quite sincere and really thought in terms of improving the socio-economic condition of rural masses and ultimately changing the face of the Rural India. But, after verifying it from the cross-sections of the society of both the states, our observation was completely different. We observed that in Bihar, there was personal rivalry and internal fighting among the Panchayati Raj representatives as such, instead of being above all the considerations, they were guided by partisan factors. Similarly in Gujarat, the Panchayati Raj representatives were divided either on factional basis or on ideological basis. The general masses expressed the views that there was no meeting ground in what local level politicians say and what they do. Some of the villagers of both the states, who were observing our interview with the local level politicians, laughingly said that "Today these people were giving all sorts of ideal talks and were feeling so much concerned about the poor people. But if asked to do something concrete for the general public, they would give one excuse or the other". We also observed that the feeling of common masses about local level politicians was more realistic.

Based on their experience, we wanted to know from the Panchayati Raj representatives as to whether they had to suggest anything in regard to functioning of local level bureaucracy and its structural arrangements. Two different opinions came from the respondents of Bihar and Gujarat. The Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives pointed out that no adequate personnel were there at village and block level. They stated that the number of extension officers and supervisory staff at the block level be increased. They cited one example of panchayat supervisors, which was found to be correct during our field visit. The number of panchayat supervisors was so limited that one panchayat supervisor was made incharge of three to four gram panchayats. Similarly the number of VLWs was not satisfactory. As

such they had to suggest that number of panchayat supervisors and VLWs be increased.

They further pointed out that previously, *i.e.*, before the bifurcation of development and revenue administration, there was only one officer from the cadre of deputy collector who used to look after both the administrative and revenue functions. But now at the block level there were two officers, *i.e.*, Circle Officer and Block Development Officer. In their opinion, this was a very good arrangement. But what they wanted to suggest that the practice of posting the Agriculture Graduates and veterinary personnel as Block Development Officers should be stopped. They further pointed out that the Deputy Collectors, who used to be the BDO, had a good training to their credit and commanded high respect in the area. But such thing is lacking in the present incumbents. As such they had to suggest that the old system of posting a Deputy Collector as BDO should be restored.

They further pointed out that recently DRDAs have been created to accelerate the pace of development which would certainly help the district authorities to implement the Integrated Rural Development Programmes. However, while the creation of DRDAs has certainly solved the problem of coordination at the district level to a certain extent, it has no coordination mechanism at the block level. As such to coordinate the development activities at the block level between the DRDAs and blocks something should be done. Again they pointed out that on paper, provisions for district and block level planning has been made, but in practice they were non-functional. The District Planning Officer has been constituted but so far they have not been allowed to function. As such something must be done to activate the Block and District Planning Agencies.

The Panchayati Raj representatives of Gujarat had nothing to suggest in this regard except to improve the coordination mechanism between the Block Administration and DRDAs. In regard to the distribution of loans and subsidies, the people's representatives of both the states said that there was bungling in distribution of loans and subsidies and real needy persons were not given such facilities. As such they had to suggest that the loans and subsidies should

be put at the disposal of Panchayati Raj Institutions and they should distribute it. It would help to reduce the problem of delay and bungling. During the course of field visit it was verified that those who were influential got the loans and subsidies quite easily but the poor people suffered at the hands of bank employees and block staff. This was more common in case of Bihar.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

It is often argued that voluntary organisations should be associated with rural development programmes. But the question left to be solved is, in what manner voluntary organisations be associated with such programmes? On this point we wanted to elicit the opinion of both the local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states.

It is interesting to note that the Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states, by and large, suggested that the voluntary organisations could do something for the development of rural areas and benefit of downtrodden section of the society, if they were associated with development programmes. Such opinion was expressed by 69 per cent and 61 per cent respondents of Bihar and Gujarat respectively. Only 31 per cent Bihar and 39 per cent Gujarat respondents expressed the view that voluntary organisations should not be associated with rural development programmes.

When we made another query as to what support voluntary organisations may lend to the rural masses in development programmes? The respondents of both the states Bihar and Gujarat said that voluntary organisations may play a significant role in educating the rural masses about government programmes/policies. The members of the voluntary organisations may go to the remote rural areas and propagate about different rural development programmes operating in their area. These organisations may also help the masses in solving their minor disputes. They may teach the masses about usefulness of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states mentioned that if the voluntary organisations provided their

helping hand to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the rural development programmes could be implemented quite successfully. The voluntary organisations may also help the rural masses in getting loans and subsidies with lesser effort. The respondents of both the states also felt that the voluntary organisations may prove to be quite useful in changing the socio-economic and political conditions of rural masses.

With the effective and active involvement of voluntary organisations in development programmes, effective participation of masses could be ensured. The respondents also expressed the view that the voluntary organisations may prove to be an effective link between the local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj Institutions by maintaining a balance between the two.

They further pointed out that the voluntary organisations through their selfless work may prove to be a watch dog and may not allow the local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives to do something which was not in the interest of general masses.

They could easily draw the attention of the Panchayati Raj representatives and local level bureaucracy towards the pressing needs of the area in general and problems of down-trodden sections in particular. The voluntary organisations may also help the rural masses in improving civic education, health and hygiene, etc. In this direction a good service has been done by Mahila Mandal in Gujarat and Yuvak Kendra in Bihar. Some local organisations in both the states have also done good service to the common people in the hours of need.

On the basis of the opinion expressed by the Panchayati Raj representatives about voluntary organisations, it could be said that majority of respondents of both the states were of the opinion that voluntary organisations may be allowed to participate in rural development programmes.

However, a minority of respondents of both the states stated that voluntary organisations should not be involved with rural development programmes. Their main argument was that there were very few voluntary organisations which were committed to the service of the people. Most of them

had either a particular political orientation or had good and informal relationship with local level bureaucracy and as such instead of serving the people they were always busy with grinding their own axe.

But on the whole, taking the credit and debit side in account, it could be said that the Panchayati Raj representatives wanted that voluntary organisations should be associated with rural development programmes.

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

People's participation is one of the prerequisites of successful working of parliamentary democracy. But it is often talked about that the rural elites do not allow the participation of general masses in democratic process and functioning of grassroots democracy. As such the research team was keen to know whether the Panchayati Raj representatives forestall people's participation in development programmes? In reply to our this question, it is interesting to note that 50 per cent Bihar respondents admitted this fact and said that the dominant sections of the Panchayati Raj Institutions did not allow the general masses to voice their viewpoints in regard to development activities being carried out in their area. But only 19 per cent Gujarat respondents admitted this fact. However, on the basis of our field experience and observation, it could be said that political leadership at the grassroots never liked that people should express their viewpoints in their presence and had any say in development activities. It may be due to the fact that the Panchayati Raj representatives might be apprehensive of going out of power as a result of political consciousness of general masses. As such they never allowed the people, even, to know about the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, this phenomenon was more visible in Bihar than Gujarat.

When we asked another question "Rural Development Programmes can be successfully implemented only when effective participation of people is ensured, do you agree?" The reply of the Bihar Panchayati Raj representatives justified Pareto's concept of elite functioning in the sense that

public they talked about political ideals and concern for their constituents but in practice they tried to befool the general masses. It is reflected from the fact that 100 per cent Panchayati Raj representatives expressed the view that rural development programmes could not be successfully implemented without securing effective participation of the general masses. But on the other hand 50 per cent of them admitted that they tried to forestall the participation of general masses in development programmes.

In case of Gujarat, a consistent response on both the points was scored. It leads us to conclude that in majority of cases the Panchayati Raj representatives of Gujarat tried to translate their feelings in action whereas in case of Bihar a wide gap between the ideals and action was observed.

Closely connected to this, we put another query how to ensure participation of general masses in development programmes. The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states expressed the view that by creating awareness in rural people about community development programmes, their participation could be ensured. They further stated that the community should be motivated to take the initiative in its hands. This could be achieved by developing a sense of community feeling and self-reliance. The rural masses, being tradition minded were not in a mood to accept the new ideals so easily as such effort should be made to educate them about the usefulness of these new ideals of an egalitarian society. Awareness should be developed and they should be taught about the usefulness of coordinated and integrated approach to development. They should be encouraged to participate in political process. This could be possible only when they were allowed to get leadership position. The Panchayati Raj representatives of both the states further mentioned that by improving the socio-economic conditions of rural masses, people's participation in development programmes could be ensured to a great extent.

On observational side, it could be said that if the Panchayati Raj representatives sincerely adhere to the ideals which they have expressed about people's participation, the dream could be fulfilled and effective participation of general masses could be ensured.

Panchayati Raj Representatives*

TABLE 1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC, DECENTRALISATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BALWANT RAI MEHTA COMMITTEE

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	60	75	56	81.6
No	20	25	13	18.4

TABLE 2 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Satisfactory	73	91.25	69	100
Not Satisfactory	7	8.75	—	—

TABLE 3 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ASOKA MEHTA COMMITTEE

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	35	43.75	34	49.28
No	45	56.25	35	50.72

TABLE 4 HOW FAR PANCHAYATI RAJ HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING ITS GOALS

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Fully	10	12.5	25	36.23
Partially	58	72.5	43	62.32
Not at all	12	15.0	1	1.45

* The total sample of Patna (Bihar) is 80 and Ahmedabad (Gujarat) 69.

TABLE 5 WHETHER PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PERFORM REGULATORY FUNCTIONS OR BE INVOLVED WITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Regulatory	7	8.75	2	2.90
Development	20	25.00	18	26.09
Both	53	66.25	49	71.01

TABLE 6 IF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS ARE INVOLVED WITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD BE THE MODE OF THEIR PARTICIPATION?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Location priority areas	46	57.5	50	72.46
Identification of beneficiaries	22	27.5	45	65.22
Identification of opportunities	31	38.75	43	62.32
Monitoring and evaluation	22	27.6	50	72.46

(The percentage is more than 100 per cent as many respondents gave more than one reply).

TABLE 7 THE WAY PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
By proxy	25	31.25	5	7.25
Active involvement	35	43.75	45	65.22
Keeping people in confidence	35	43.75	51	73.92

(The percentage exceed more than 100 per cent as many respondents gave more than one reply).

TABLE 8 DO YOU FEEL THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE SCRAPPED?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	2	2.5	6	8.69
No	78	97.5	63	91.31

TABLE 9 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CODE OF CONDUCT MAINTAINED BY PANCHAYATI RAJ OFFICIALS

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	56	70.00	42	60.87
No	24	30.00	27	39.13

TABLE 10 DO YOU KNOW THE PERSONS CONCERNED FOLLOW THESE CODE OF CONDUCTS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	50	62.5	39	56.52
No	30	37.5	30	43.48

TABLE 11 FEELINGS ABOUT THE VLW

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Cooperative	46	57.5	54	78.26
Non-Cooperative	34	42.5	15	21.74

TABLE 12 DO YOU FEEL THAT VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH RD TASKS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	55	68.75	42	60.86
No	25	31.25	27	39.14

TABLE 13 DO YOU FEEL THAT OFFICIALS FEEL CONCERNED ABOUT POLITICAL LEADERS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Very much	36	45.00	49	71.02
Somewhat	36	45.00	18	26.08
Not at all	8	10.00	2	2.90

TABLE 14 HOW DO YOU USUALLY APPROACH
AN OFFICIAL?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Send a letter	39	48.75	28	40.58
Personal meeting	56	70.00	69	100
In deligation	15	18.75	26	37.68
Telephone	7	8.75	32	46.37
Other	—	—	—	—

(The percentage obtained to more than 100 per cent as many of the respondents adopted more than one method).

TABLE 15 OFFICIALS APPROACH POLITICAL LEADERS
TO GAIN SPECIAL FAVOUR. WHAT IS YOUR
EXPERIENCE?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Frequently	15	18.75	30	43.47
Sometimes	45	56.25	20	28.99
Rarely	10	12.5	9	13.05
Never	10	12.5	10	14.49

TABLE 16 PEOPLE OFTEN COMPLAIN ABOUT
ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	47	58.75	49	71.01
Agree	26	32.5	9	13.04
Disagree	5	6.25	11	15.95
Strongly disagree	2	2.5	—	—

TABLE 17 IT IS GENERALLY REPORTED THAT POLITICAL
LEADERS OFTEN KEEP THEMSELVES CUT OFF FROM
COMMON MAN. WHAT IS YOUR FEELING?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	35	43.75	17	24.63
No	45	56.25	52	75.37

TABLE 18 IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT WITHOUT CONSULTING PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES THE LOCAL LEVEL BUREAUCRACY FUNCTIONS IN COMPLETE ISOLATION. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS CONTENTION?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	45	56.25	38	55.08
No	35	43.75	31	44.92

TABLE 19 THERE IS A FEELING THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ IS LIKE A GOD THAT FAILED. DO YOU AGREE?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	26	32.5	8	11.59
No	54	67.5	61	88.41

TABLE 20 WHAT ARE YOUR REACTIONS ABOUT THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Highly satisfactory	11	13.75	40	57.90
Satisfactory	33	41.25	20	28.98
Unsatisfactory	26	32.5	7	10.14
Not at all satisfactory	10	12.5	2	2.90

TABLE 21 DO YOU FEEL THAT PRESENT STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL BUREAUCRACY AND PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS ARE SATISFACTORY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	58	72.5	63	1.30
No	22	27.5	6	8.70

TABLE 22 DO YOU FEEL THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES PUT UNDUE PRESSURES ON GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN SELF INTEREST?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	30	37.5	12	17.39
No	50	62.5	57	82.61

TABLE 23 GENERALLY IT IS REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SUCCUMB BEFORE PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES. DO YOU AGREE?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	11	13.75	21	30.43
No	69	86.25	48	69.57

TABLE 24 WHETHER LOCAL LEVEL BUREAUCRACY UNDULY INTERFERES IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	20	25.00	17	24.63
No	60	75.00	52	75.37

TABLE 25 IT IS GENERALLY REPORTED THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES FORESTALL PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. DO YOU AGREE?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	40	50.00	13	18.85
No	40	50.00	56	81.15

TABLE 26 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED ONLY AFTER ENSURING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF GENERAL MASSES.
DO YOU AGREE?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	80	100	64	92.75
No	—	—	5	7.25

TABLE 27 HAVE YOU TO SUGGEST ANY CHANGE IN REGARD TO POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	60	75.00	40	57.98
No	20	20.00	29	42.02

TABLE 28 DO YOU FEEL THAT FINANCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS ARE INADEQUATE?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	60	75.00	50	72.46
No	20	25.00	19	27.54

TABLE 29 DO YOU FEEL THAT LOANS AND SUBSIDIES SHALL BE KEPT AT THE DISPOSAL OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	71	88.75	50	72.45
No	9	11.25	19	27.54

CHAPTER IV

OFFICIAL'S AWARENESS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

In the present chapter an attempt is being made to evaluate the perception and awareness of local level bureaucracy of Panchayati Raj Institutions, their functioning and suggestions in regard to improving the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Side by side we have also tried to know the bureaucratic view in regard to attitude of Panchayati Raj representatives towards local level bureaucracy. We have also tried to assess whether local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives work hand in hand in implementing different rural development programmes. Their opinions were obtained with the help of structured and guided schedule. Their reactions and replies to our fixed answer and opinionative questions are as follows.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

An overwhelming majority of nearly 90 per cent of local officials both in Bihar and Gujarat had the vivid knowledge of democratic decentralisation and recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. However, it was disheartening to note that majority of them did not know about the recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee. Of course, they know about Asoka Mehta Committee but when asked about the specific recommendations, they had to reply that neither they have seen the report nor have read it even in abridged form anywhere. This leads us to conclude that the officials in both the states were not interested at all to know about the main recommendations of the latest committee (Asoka Mehta) on the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. But it was encouraging to note that the

officials at the district level, particularly higher officials, in both the states, had the knowledge of recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee and during the course of interview they listed some of the recommendations for our use. This also leads us to conclude that the village and block level bureaucracy is not interested in knowing about the latest government reports.

As regards functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions, they had to state that these institutions have been successful to some extent. They should improve their functioning. When they were asked whether Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped? An overwhelming majority of local level officials replied in negative. However, there were some over zealous and so called smart officials who said that it would be better if the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped. They had to express the view that after the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions dirty politics and factional fight had been the predominant feature of rural areas. Since the general rural masses still live under subjugation and have not attained full consciousness, they are being exploited at the time of elections by rural elites. They further pointed out that though Panchayati Raj Institutions are not directly involved in rural development programmes, they put undue pressure on local level bureaucracy for selfish ends. This type of reaction was more frequently expressed by the TDOs of talukas in Gujarat. They reported that if they decline to do something in the interest of president and members of Panchayat Samities, they are threatened of transfer and other sorts of harassments. However, this type of opinion was expressed by negligible section of the BDOs in Bihar. This type of reaction in Gujarat may be due to the fact that election for Panchayati Raj bodies are held regularly and Panchayati Raj representatives are more conscious and do not allow the local level bureaucracy to function in arbitrary manner.

When asked whether the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform regulatory functions or development functions or both. It is encouraging to note that in spite of their earlier reactions to our queries, majority of respondents said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform develop-

ment works (47.5%) and both regulatory and development functions (45%). Only a negligible section of local level bureaucracy (7%) said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform regulatory functions only.

Since much criticism has been made in the past about the manner of functioning of the Panchayati Raj leaders, the team was interested in eliciting the opinion of the local level officials as to whether the Panchayati Raj leaders perform their duties by proxy or by involving themselves actively or by taking people in confidence. Nearly one fourth of Bihar officials had to say that the Panchayati Raj functionaries discharge their duties by proxy, whereas only one eighth of Gujarat officials shared their view. According to officials perception in both the states majority of the Panchayati Raj leaders discharge their duties either by getting them actively involved or by taking people in confidence. Some of the Bihar and Gujarat officials said that to make the Panchayati Raj leaders more active and action oriented like MLAs and MPs, they should be given some fixed amount as salary. By doing so we may attract some enthusiastic and hard working people to come forward to join the Panchayati Raj Institutions formally.

Again, the research team was interested to examine the relationship between the government officials and Panchayati Raj representatives, *vis-a-vis* the role expected to be played by government officials in helping the Panchayati Raj functionaries in discharge of their duties. In this connection, it is encouraging to note that 100 per cent of the officials in both the states expressed the view that they really want to change the face of Rural India. The local level bureaucracy and the Panchayati Raj functionaries should function like two wheels of the same cart. Most of the development works are delayed and are nipped in the bud only because of the legpulling business by both the sides. Some of them, sympathizing with the Panchayati Raj leaders, said that since majority of the Panchayati Raj functionaries are either illiterate, semi-literate or little educated, the local level bureaucracy must act like a friend, philosopher and guide to them. They had to suggest that while discharging their duties the government officials should not go beyond the

rules and regulations only for the sake of maintaining good relations with the Panchayati Raj functionaries. The local level bureaucracy should not function in the partisan manner. They should be friendly to all and whatever action they take it must be in the largest interest of the people in the area. The officials should make aware the Panchayati Raj functionaries about their role and responsibility by way of extension services, propaganda, documentary films and field demonstrations. They should also educate the Panchayati Raj functionaries and the general masses about the different development works.

The lower level bureaucrats, in the opinion of sample respondents, cannot be effective because of their own limitations. They have the fear in their mind that if they do something which is generally not liked by the dominant section of the society, they may face far reaching consequences. They further pointed out that some of the influential leaders have connections with higher level officials and ministers and pressurise the lower level government functionaries to do something towards their selfish ends. As such they had to suggest that the higher officials should be careful enough to check this phenomena and protect the lower level bureaucracy from the high handedness of Panchayati Raj functionaries.

While expressing such view they never meant that the local level officials should not respect the views of the Panchayati Raj representatives and should not concede to their legal and legitimate demands. They were of the opinion that there should be mutual cooperation between the Panchayati Raj representatives and local level bureaucracy. They should not prove to be an stumbling block for each other. This requires the total change of the heart of both the sides. At the present moment they have the suspicious eye on each other which results into the dismal performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions and local level bureaucracy. This suspicious tendency should be removed and only then we can think in terms of cooperation, coordination and efficiency. This will ultimately change the rural scene.

They further expressed the view that the Panchayati Raj leaders should discuss the problems of their areas with the

government officials and by a consensus arrive at between the local level civil servants and the people's representatives, the problems of the area could be sorted out. The works of the area should be completed on proper schedule and as such both of them should evaluate and monitor the welfare activities of the area. While discharging their duties they should be guided by rules and act in a non-partisan manner and be above communal and community considerations.

In all the activities of rural development they should keep people in confidence and instead of developing a sense of alienation they should win the confidence of general masses. Local level officials are also required to provide legal advice to the Panchayati Raj representatives on important issues. They should not come under the influence of higher politicians rather they should be committed to their duties and keep the Panchayati Raj representatives in confidence. They should be like innovators and it should be their prime duty to motivate the Panchayati Raj representatives to channelise their energy towards constructive directions. The officers, while taking decisions, should not act independently rather they should believe in collective decisions in which the Panchayati Raj representatives be actively involved. They further pointed out that if there is distrust and mutual hatred among local officials and the Panchayati Raj representatives neither of them could discharge their duty successfully.

In regard to powers and duties of the Panchayati Raj bodies, they had to suggest that more statutory powers should be given to the Panchayati Raj bodies. Both the officials of Bihar and Gujarat suggested that to minimise the undue pressure of cases in subdivisional, district and high courts, the disputes relating to rent collection and land should be put at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. According to them this will also help the people in reposing confidence in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The officials of Bihar pointed out that in principle so many powers have been given to the Panchayati Raj bodies but due to political interference at higher level these powers hardly take any practical shape. They pointed out that if powers of the Panchayati Raj bodies are not increased, at

least, they should have the full exercise of power whatever has been assigned to them under the existing act.

Based on the experience of field study, one of the objectives was to suggest some structural change in the Panchayati Raj Institutions and local level bureaucracy. After explaining the details of Asoka Mehta Committee Report to the field level government officials, we made specific query to suggest structural change in the Panchayati Raj bodies. In reply to our such query they were quick in pointing out that we should not go for another experiment. The existing arrangement is quite good and let us strengthen the same and make it more action oriented. They rightly pointed out that rural people are now familiarised with these institutions and by now they fully know the dynamics of its functioning. If some new experiment is made, it will take time to familiarise the people with it and as a result whatever progress in this direction has been made will come to a halt. As such, instead of having a new structure, more development and regulatory powers be given to the existing Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, they pointed out that the government should see that the elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions are held at stated intervals and in no case these bodies should be superseded. If the situation so warrants to supersede the elections must be held within six months of its supersession.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section we would like to present the viewpoints of local level officials on the issue relating to whether Panchayati Raj Institutions should be involved in development works. In this connection, it is heartening to note that officials of both Bihar and Gujarat districts were of the opinion that the Panchayati Raj Institutions, apart from their regulatory functions, be involved with development programmes. We made a deeper query that if the Panchayati Raj Institutions are allowed to participate in development programme, what mode of participation of the Panchayati Raj bodies they would like to suggest? They reacted by suggesting that the Panchayati Raj representatives may

prove to be quite useful in deciding the basic needs and priority areas of work in their locality. To have a balanced growth of the area, on the basis of socio-economic background, the Panchayati Raj representatives may perform useful job. It is noticed that most of the areas lack in facilities like primary education, rural health, sanitation, water supply; rural roads, electricity, handicraft and village industry, etc. In providing these problems a solution the Panchayati Raj representatives may provide a helping hand to the local level bureaucracy. It is well known that most of the Panchayati Raj leaders command respect and are known for their honesty and integrity. As such, their counsel to general masses will be more effective in comparison to the efforts made by government officials. They further commented that some of the development works in rural areas are not taken up due to conservative and traditional outlook of the general masses. The Panchayati Raj representatives may help the general masses in removing their such outlook by explaining the usefulness of development programmes. People will be easily convinced if their representatives explain them the government policies and their usefulness.

However, while involving the Panchayati Raj representatives in development programmes, some rules of business may be formulated which should be observed by the Panchayati Raj representatives. For example, before initiation of any development programme in the area, the representatives should call the meeting of the Gram Sabha and should explain the different aspects of that programme to the masses and on the basis of consensus the location and installation of any development project be made. They should also keep in mind that the project should be located at such a place from where maximum demand of the public are served. If any development programme is assigned to the Panchayati Raj, the representatives of the Panchayati Raj should form a monitoring cell of the people of the area to monitor and maintain the project. In regard to formulation and implementation of development programmes, they suggested that the Gram Panchayat should be the first point from where the scheme should be formulated and it should be trans-

mitted onwards to the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad. These two upper tiers of organisation should scrutinise and finalise the programmes and should make the Gram Panchayats responsible for the implementation of the programme. If some Gram Panchayats are unable to complete the development programmes as per schedule, they should not be assigned any development programme at least for a year as an exemplary punishment. At the same time the upper tiers, *i.e.*, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad should communicate the Gram Panchayat of their displeasure on the non-performance of the Panchayat. It should also be made known to the public, so that the general masses may question the efficiency of their representatives. On the other hand, the Panchayats which excell in implementing rural development programme should be rewarded at a well organised public function and the state government should give more grants to such Panchayats.

To our another query as to what type of cooperation is required between government officials and the Panchayati Raj functionaries in regard to the implementation of rural development programmes, the local level officials of both the states opined that better understanding and mutual cooperation is highly required. This understanding and cooperation is required at all the stages, *viz.*, selection of programmes, identification of beneficiaries, provision for infrastructural facilities, loans and subsidies, etc. They should jointly move from village to village and explain to the ignorant rural masses about different rural development programmes and policies of the government. They should see that correct and useful plans for village development are formulated. At the implementational level, it should be their duty to see that the benefits of development programmes actually reach the poorest of the poor section of the society so as they could be brought above the poverty line. The officials of Bihar pointed out that any developmental programme, instead of completed departmentally, should be assigned to the Gram Panchayats and the Panchayat Samities because it will bring the sense of participation among the Panchayati Raj representatives. At the same time they can be made accountable for the success or failure of the particular

scheme. This will also bring the sense of responsibility among the people's representatives. At the beginning of every financial year, the government officials and the Panchayati Raj representatives should sit together and demarcate the budgetary allocation for different development programmes jointly for the whole area. They were liberal enough to mention that in regard to development programmes the government officials should be fully placed under and made responsible to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Instead of interfering in day-to-day development programmes they should only provide necessary information and technical assistance to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, this does not mean that they should make themselves as silent spectators of the scene. If something wrong is done or illegal means is adopted by the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the local level bureaucracy should be alert enough to check it. Wherever they feel that improper and wrong steps are taken by the Panchayati Raj bodies, they should check it and bring sense among the Panchayati Raj representatives. They should also have a watch over the funds so that it should not be misutilised. The Bihar officials, in this connection, pointed out, that the NREP work has been assigned to the Gram Panchayats but this does not mean that Panchayat and Block level officials should not have watchful eye on the implementation of this programme. They should go to the sight of the work, watch the progress and suggest ways and means to accelerate the pace of development work.

Both local level officials and the Panchayati Raj representatives should join hands to mobilise local resources for development work. Instead of being self-centred and partisan, they should work jointly for ameliorating the condition of the down trodden section of the society. If the Panchayati Raj representatives are vigilant and committed, they will not allow the local level bureaucracy to do anything wrong. At the same time it is also required that the Panchayati Raj representatives should have good rapport and contact with various development departments at the block and district level and search for the avenues of development programmes for their areas. They should also mobilise resources for the

construction of panchayat bhawans in their respective areas. It is just a coincidence that, by and large, such opinion was expressed by local level officials of both the states—Bihar and Gujarat.

The most discouraging feature which was noted in the course of interview with the sample respondents was that local level bureaucracy was not aware of different agricultural and rural development programmes, introduced by the government of India, for the benefit of rural masses. In reply to our two specific questions: What are the different agricultural development programmes operating in your area? and please name different rural development programmes introduced by the Government of India in recent years, the sample officials in both the states presented a very discouraging picture. Instead of being well informed about the programmes, they simply depended on guess work while replying to our query. Some of them frankly admitted that they know only about those programmes of which they were the implementing agencies. About other programmes, they failed even to list them. However, the district level officials in both the states and the BDOs in Bihar and TDOs in Gujarat knew about all the schemes of agricultural and rural development introduced by the Government of India.

This leads us to conclude that the field level functionaries mostly depended on the knowledge supplied by their senior officers in regard to agricultural and rural development programmes. They did not take trouble to go through the guidelines of different programmes circulated to the district and block officials by the concerned ministries of the Government of India. The state of affairs is disappointing in the sense that the local level bureaucracy, which is supposed to act as the ears and eyes of general masses in regard to benefits to be derived by them from different development schemes was not alive to its duty. They are supposed to be the teachers of the general masses to teach about the usefulness of government programmes/policies. But when the teacher himself does not know what he will teach he cannot be expected to impart the knowledge about the government programmes for the pupils. This phenomenon was observed equally in Bihar and Gujarat. To be more specific,

the extension officers and VLWs were found to be lacking in awareness about the different agricultural and rural development schemes. This may be attributed to the fact that the BDOs and TDOs were found to be overbusy with office work and could hardly get time to visit different villages and monitor the functioning of field level officials. In Bihar it was reported that from the time the persons from Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Departments are posted as BDOs, this phenomenon has increased manifold. The field level functionaries do not pay them such respect which they used to pay to a deputy collector posted as BDO. They do not care for the BDO and neglect their duties. Instead of becoming the friend, philosopher and guide to the general masses, they become their exploiters. In collusion with the dominant and affluent section of the rural society, they do not allow the benefits of development programmes to percolate to the general masses.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

In recent years it is frequently suggested that voluntary organisations should be associated with development works. As such, we wanted to know from the officials of both Bihar and Gujarat as to what opinion they had in regard to associating voluntary organisations in development tasks? Closely connected to this we also wanted to explore as to what mode of participation of voluntary organisations they had to suggest and how voluntary organisations could help the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is encouraging to note that officials found the involvement of voluntary organisations in development works quite useful. They were of the opinion that voluntary organisations could prove to be an effective link between government officials and the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They could freely assimilate them with the common masses and could know their feelings and emotions. Moreover, some of the voluntary organisations are known for their honesty, integrity and selfless services. If they are involved with development programmes certainly it will go a long way in changing the rural social context. They might have a watchful eye both on government officials

and people's representatives so that the development programmes are not exploited for selfish ends. Voluntary organisations could also take up the development works in their hands. There should be some statutory provision to assign certain percentage of development work to the voluntary organisations. For social development, they could do quite constructive work because it is the voluntary organisations which bring to the notice of press and public any atrocity committed on the down trodden section of the society. Voluntary organisations also help the general masses in certain eventualities of natural calamity like flood, fire, epidemic, etc. As such, voluntary organisations have occupied some respectful place in the minds of general masses and if they are associated with development works the general masses would have a sense of confidence that they would be the beneficiaries of development programmes because the voluntary organisations are involved in them. Voluntary organisations may also motivate the general masses to form cooperative societies of various types which could be of direct interest to them. Moreover, government officials may not be in a position to influence the voluntary organisations as they are doing in the case of Panchayati Raj leaders. They could also play an effective role in identification of programmes as well as beneficiaries. They may also help the needy persons of the society in procuring government loans and subsidies for their benefit without any delay. They may prove to be helpful in improving the sanitary conditions of the rural areas and may motivate the ignorant rural masses to adopt urban way of life. They may also educate the rural masses as to how they would improve their socio-economic conditions by taking benefit of government programmes. Voluntary organisations may also help the general masses in settling minor disputes of the area amicably. The officials also expressed the view that voluntary organisations could educate the general masses in basic principles of democracy and functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. For this purpose they may utilise various methods like organising public meetings, displaying charts, documentaries, success stories, role played by media of communication, etc. In rural society they can also form diffe-

rent associations for women, children and down trodden sections of the society and through these small associations they could educate the general masses. They may prove to be very effective instrument of increasing the adult education programmes by inspiring youth clubs and Mahila Mandals.

On the whole they were of the opinion that these are some of the important development tasks which could be efficiently performed by the voluntary organisations. As such they were of the opinion that voluntary organisations should be actively involved with rural development programmes.

However, there was a minority of officials in both the states, who were opposed to getting voluntary organisations involved in the rural development programmes. They felt that if voluntary organisations were involved, instead of proving themselves as the third limb, they may prove an stumbling block in development programmes. They further pointed out that voluntary organisations in India are not so selfless as they are supposed to be. Moreover, the working experience of voluntary organisations in our country had also been far from satisfactory. Experiences show that instead of being non-committal and non-partisan, voluntary organisations in our country are loaded with particular set of political ideology and sometimes they enter into collusion with local level bureaucracy and influential sections of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In such a situation involving voluntary organisations with development work would not prove useful in any way. As such this minority of official's, both in Bihar and Gujarat, were not in favour of involving voluntary organisations with development works in rural areas.

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

During the course of field visit it was observed that people's participation in functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions and implementation of different rural development programmes was almost non-existent in both the states of Bihar and Gujarat. As such we made a specific query from the officials of both the states as to what strategy they

would like to suggest to make people's participation more effective and meaningful. In this connection, the officials of both the states suggested that due to their weak financial condition, low level of literacy and age old subjugation, the rural masses were demoralised and had become fatalist. As such what is required at this stage is to organise public meetings in rural areas, educate the general masses about their rights and privileges and encourage them to come forward to share the fruits of development programmes. Once they are motivated and made aware of their privileges, the general masses will come forward and will take initiative in their own hands. They should be organised in a group but the group should not be so large. The group should be organised on the basis of common interest and there should be a group leader. They should form their small cooperative societies and these small cooperative societies should be federated into a bigger one at the Panchayat level. All the Gram Panchayat level, cooperative societies should be federated into block cooperative societies. They further pointed out that at the present moment the Gram Sabhas are virtually defunct; they meet only on paper. As such they should be activated and made more effective. To ensure people's participation in different development programmes, it is essential that, before introducing any programme for the area, the Gram Sabha is called and views of the different sections of the society be obtained. In such meetings special care should be taken to ensure the presence of down trodden section of the society, viz., scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women. If any scheme or project is started after keeping the people of that area into the confidence, they will feel it their duty to maintain the project. Their participation can also be secured in the implementation of the scheme. Since they have the only asset in the form of their physical labour, they could easily be persuaded to put their labour for the timely completion of the project. The participation of the general masses can also be ensured by way of making them responsible for the quality of all on-going schemes. They should be encouraged not to allow the contractors to use sub-standard materials in the construction of the project by keeping their watchful eye on the

construction site. Their formal participation is also sought for checking the dictatorial and arbitrary actions of the Panchayati Raj leaders.

On observational front, it is ironical to note that the government officials had all praise for people's participation in development programmes and had to suggest some strategy for effective participation of general masses in development programmes but in spite of 37 years of independence and more than 30 years of the functioning of the community development programmes and the Panchayati Raj Institutions our general masses are still there where they had been before. Only a slight material and qualitative change has been noticed in their socio-economic and political conditions. They are still treated as subjects and they are still guided by subject culture. Something substantive should be done to make them effective and viable citizen of our on-going political system, particularly, our on-going grass-roots political systems.

Local Level Bureaucracy*

TABLE 1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BALWANT RAI MEHTA COMMITTEE

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	70	87.5	73	91.25
No	10	12.5	7	8.75

TABLE 2 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Satisfactory	78	97.5	60	100
Not satisfactory	2	2.5	—	—

TABLE 3 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ASOKA MEHTA COMMITTEE

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	58	72.5	31	38.65
No	22	27.5	49	61.25

TABLE 4 DO YOU FEEL THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Fully	8	10.00	22	27.5
Partially	69	86.25	50	62.5
Not at all	3	3.75	8	10.00

*Total sample of bureaucracy include 80 respondents from Patna (Bihar) and 80 from Ahmedabad (Gujarat).

TABLE 5 WHETHER PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PERFORM REGULATORY FUNCTIONS OR BE INVOLVED WITH DEVELOPMENT TASKS?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Regulatory	6	7.5	5	6.25
Development	38	47.5	20	25.00
Both	36	45.0	55	68.75

TABLE 6 IF INVOLVED WITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WHAT MODE OF PARTICIPATION WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUGGEST?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Locating priority areas	46	57.5	43	53.75
Identification of opportunities	29	34.25	49	61.25
Identification of beneficiaries	45	56.25	45	56.25
Monitoring and Evaluating	29	34.25	40	50.00

The percentage is more than 100 per cent as some of the respondents gave more than one reply.

TABLE 7 THE WAY PANCHAYATI RAJ FUNCTIONARIES DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
By proxy	20	25.00	9	11.25
Active involvement	40	50.00	35	43.75
Keeping people in confidence	20	25.00	45	56.25

TABLE 8 DO YOU FEEL THAT THE PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE SCRAPPED?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	6	7.5	10	12.5
No	74	92.5	70	87.5

TABLE 9 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND RULES AND REGULATIONS TO BE MAINTAINED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	65	81.25	62	77.5
No	15	18.75	18	22.5

TABLE 10 DO YOU KNOW THE PERSON CONCERNED FOLLOW SUCH CODE OF CONDUCTS AND OFFICIAL RULES IN DISCHARGE OF THEIR DAY TO DAY FUNCTIONING?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	59	73.75	62	77.5
No	21	26.25	18	22.5

TABLE 11 FEELING ABOUT VLW

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cooperative	67	83.75	77	96.25
Non-cooperative	13	16.25	3	3.75

TABLE 12 DO YOU FEEL THAT VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	63	78.75	52	65.00
No	17	21.25	28	35.00

TABLE 13 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE RECENTLY INTRODUCED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	80	100	76	95.00
No	—	—	4	5.00

TABLE 14 DO YOU FEEL THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY COOPERATION BETWEEN LOWER LEVEL BUREAUCRACY AND PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	79	98.75	72	90.00
No	1	1.25	8	10.00

TABLE 15 DO YOU FEEL THAT OFFICIALS SHOULD CONSULT THE PANCHAYATI RAJ LEADERS IN DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very much	45	56.25	38	47.5
Somewhat	35	43.75	35	43.75
Not at all	—	—	7	8.75

TABLE 16 PLEASE MENTION, IN REGARD TO WHICH PROBLEM POLITICIANS FREQUENTLY COME TO YOU

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Guidance for administrative rules	22	27.5	55	78.75
Technical advice	51	63.75	52	65.00
Law and order problem, sanction and approval of loans for their constituents	46	57.75	55	68.75
Problem of Administrative delay	31	38.75	53	66.25
Problem relating to conflict between village groups	21	26.25	35	43.75
Other problems	17	21.25	18	22.5

TABLE 17 HOW OFTEN DO POLITICAL LEADERS ASK FOR SPECIAL FAVOUR FROM OFFICIALS?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Frequently	24	30.00	8	10.00
Sometimes	41	51.25	35	43.75
Rarely	8	10.00	9	11.25
Never	7	8.75	28	35.00

The percentage varied from 100 per cent as many respondents gave more than one reply.

TABLE 18 HOW OFTEN DO OFFICIALS ASK FOR FAVOUR FROM POLITICAL LEADER?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Frequently	2	2.5	10	12.5
Sometimes	39	48.75	35	43.75
Rarely	29	36.25	8	10.00
Never	10	12.5	27	33.75

TABLE 19 PLEASE CHOOSE ONE WHICH MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFFICIALS AND POLITICAL LEADERS

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
While performing his duties the officials has nothing to do with political leader	29	36.25	47	58.75
After explaining rules and regulations, the responsibility of official is over	15	16.25	38	47.5
Officials should consult leaders and enlist their co operation in his work	46	57.75	45	56.25
The official is mainly guided by political leader	3	3.75	27	33.75

The variation in percentage is due to the fact that more than one reply was obtained from official respondents.

TABLE 20 PEOPLE OFTEN COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY. WHAT IS YOUR REACTION?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	5	2.5	30	37.5
Agree	52	65.00	18	22.5
Disagree	19	23.75	10	12.5
Strongly disagree	4	5.00	22	27.5

TABLE 21 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ATTITUDE OF POLITICAL LEADERS TOWARDS OFFICIALS?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Helpful	39	48.75	63	78.75
Indifferent	21	26.25	13	16.25
Unhelpful	10	12.5	2	2.5
Any other	10	12.5	2	2.5

TABLE 22 WHAT WAY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEEK THE COOPERATION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ LEADERS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
In identification of beneficiaries	66	82.5	54	67.5
Selection of priority areas	61	76.25	50	62.5
Monitoring	27	33.75	40	50.00
Sanctioning of loans and subsidy	21	26.25	35	43.75

The percentage varies because of the fact that one respondent gave more than one reply.

TABLE 23 DO YOU FIND PRESENT PANCHAYATI RAJ STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS SATISFACTORY?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	60	75.00	60	75.00
No	20	25.00	20	25.00

TABLE 24 DO YOU FEEL THAT PRESENT BUREAUCRATIC SET UP AT LOCAL LEVEL IS SATISFACTORY?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	49	61.25	67	83.75
No	31	38.75	13	16.25

TABLE 25 IT IS REPORTED BY THE GENERAL MASSES THAT OFFICIALS AND PANCHAYATI RAJ LEADERS ENTER INTO COLLUSION AND HEARTLESSLY EXPLOIT THE RURAL MASSES. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT?

	Bihar		Gujarat	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Yes	23	28.75	15	18.75
No	57	71.25	65	81.25

TABLE 26 WHETHER LOCAL LEVEL BUREAUCRACY UNDULY INTERFERE IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF LOCAL BODIES?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	14	17.5	6	7.5
No	66	82.5	74	92.5

TABLE 27 IT IS GENERALLY REPORTED THAT PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES FORESTALL PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	49	61.25	40	50.00
No	31	38.75	40	50.00

TABLE 28 DO YOU FEEL THAT LOANS AND SUBSIDIES IN REGARD TO DIFFERENT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE KEPT AT THE DISPOSAL OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS?

	<i>Bihar</i>		<i>Gujarat</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	38	47.5	50	62.5
No	42	52.5	30	37.5

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has sponsored a Research Project entitled "Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy and Rural Development" to be conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Administration in two states of India, *i.e.*, Bihar and Gujarat. The basic purpose of this research project is to examine whether the Panchayati Raj Institutions and their representatives are alive to their duties and feel concerned about all round development of rural areas. At the same time it is also intended to investigate about the functioning of local level bureaucracy as to what extent they cooperate with the Panchayati Raj representatives in the implementation of rural development programme. We also want to know as to whether these two organisations are responsible for implementation of rural development programme work in complete cooperation of each other or whether there is love and hate feeling among them. Sometimes it is also reported that these two organisations enter into some sort of collusion with a result, the rural masses, for whom the rural development programmes are specially designed, are deprived of the benefits of such programmes and benefits are being exploited by the affluent and elite section of rural society. On the basis of the findings of this research project, it is also proposed to examine as to whether the structural arrangements are conducive for all round development of rural India. If they are not conducive, we also propose to suggest some new structural arrangements for Panchayati Raj Institutions and Local Level Bureaucracy so that they may function as an effective instrument of social change and development.

Keeping these objectives in mind we have come to your state and district to solicit your opinion in regard to these problems. The informations which we want to gather are presented here in question form. You are kindly requested

to reply to our query in a free and frank manner. We would like to make it quite clear that it will be highly confidential and it has entirely academic value.

The questions which are of positive or negative nature, you have to tick mark in 'Yes' or 'No'. But the questions which are suggestive and opinionative you are free to answer the way you like.

IDENTIFICATION PARTICULARS

Village	Block	District	State
Name :			
Age :			
Sex :			
Caste :			
Education :			
Base :	Urban :	Rural :	

No. of Dependent Family Members :

Land holding :	Irrigated :	Non-irrigated :
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Family Profession :

- (a) Position held :
- (b) Village :
- (c) Block :
- (d) District :

Experience :

Income : (a) Individual :
(b) Family :

Date of Interview : _____

Place of Interview : _____

Signature : _____

Schedule I**BUREAUCRACY**

1. Since how long you are in this job ?
2. Since how long you are working at this post ?
3. Do you know about Democratic Decentralisation and recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee ?
 Yes () No ()
4. What is the basic structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions in your State ?
5. Do you know that all the three organs of Panchayati Raj Institutions function in your State/District ?
6. Have you heard about Asoka Mehta Committee?
 Yes () No ()
 If yes, what are the main recommendations of Asoka Mehta Committee.
7. Do you know about the steps taken in regard to implementation of Asoka Mehta Committee by Central/State Government ?
8. How far do you think Panchayati Raj has been able to achieve its goal ?
 (a) Fully () Partially () Not at all ()

(b) If not at all, assign reasons.

9. Whether in your opinion Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform the regulatory functions or they should be involved in development programmes:

- (a) Regulatory ()
- (b) Development ()
- (c) Both ()

- ✓ 10. If you feel that Panchayati Raj Institutions should be involved in development programmes what mode of participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions you would like to suggest :

- (a) Locating the priority areas
- (b) Identification of opportunities
- (c) Identification of beneficiaries
- (d) Monitoring and Evaluation

11. How Panchayati Raj functionaries discharge their duties ?

- (a) By proxy
- (b) Active involvement
- (c) Keeping people in confidence

- ✓ 12. If Panchayati Raj representatives are involved in development task what criteria and consideration they should have in selection of programmes.

- ✓ 13. What mutual cooperation is expected from Panchayati Raj representatives and government officials in implementation of rural development programmes ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

14. Based on your personal experience do you feel that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped.

Yes () No ()

If yes, assign reasons.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- ✓ 15. What role you expect to be played by government officials in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions ?

16. Do you know about the code of conduct and official rules to be maintained by government officials and Panchayati Raj Representatives ?

Yes () No ()

17. If yes, what are they ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

18. Do you know that the persons concerned follow these code of conducts and official rules in discharge of their day to day functioning ?

Yes () No ()

19. VLWs are supposed to be the ears and eyes of community leaders. What are your feelings about

them ?

Cooperative ()

Non-cooperative ()

20. If cooperative, what are the modes through which they help the community leaders and general masses:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

If not cooperative, what are the reasons ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

21. Do you feel that voluntary organisations should be associated with Rural Development tasks ?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what kind of support they could lend to the Panchayati Raj leaders ?

22. How voluntary organisations could prove an effective link between government officials and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

23. It is generally felt that voluntary organisations could educate the general masses in basic principles of democracy and functioning in Panchayati Raj Institutions, what are the means through which they could educate them.

24. Which would you say are the most important programmes of agricultural development in your area? Please rate the effectiveness of each programme mentioned?

Effectiveness

	Much	Some	None
(a)			
(b)			
(c)			
(d)			

25. Have you any knowledge of recently introduced rural development programme?

Yes () No ()

If yes, please mention them.

- (a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

26. Do you feel that the objectives of rural development programmes can be achieved only when the local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj representatives work in complete cooperation of each other.

Yes () No ()

27. Do you feel that the officials should consult the Panchayati Raj leaders?

Very much () Somewhat () Not at all ()

28. How often you consult with the following :

- (a) Village Political Leaders

- (b) Block Political Leaders
- (c) District Political Leaders
- (d) State Political Leaders
- (e) Village Officials
- (f) Block Officials
- (g) District Officials
- (h) State Officials

29. How often do political leaders seek your help ?

Frequently () Sometimes () Rarely ()
Never ()

We have referred to four categories of leaders, i.e., village, block, district and state. How often they come to you for help ?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| (a) Village | Daily |
| (b) Block | Weekly |
| (c) District | Monthly |
| (d) State | Half-yearly |
| (e) Central | Rarely |

30. Certain officials are of the view that there are certain political leaders who can be accommodated. On your personal experience, please tell whether you accommodate such leaders.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| (a) Leaders of Panchayat Samiti | Always |
| (b) Leaders of Zila Parishad | Sometimes |
| (c) MLAs | Never |
| (d) Activists of Political Parties | |
| (e) Others | |

31. Some officials use to say that politicians come to them with so many problems. A partial list is given below. Please mention in regard to which problem they frequently come to you:

- (a) Guidance for administrative rules

- (b) For technical advice
- (c) Law and order problem
- (d) Sanction and approval of loans for their constituents
- (e) Problems of administrative delay
- (f) Problems relating to conflict between village groups
- (g) Other problems

32. Political leaders often approach officials for getting something done. How often do political leaders bring to your attention problems concerning :

Usually	()	Sometimes	()
Rarely	()	Never	()

- (a) Matters concerning personal benefit.
- (b) Interest of relatives.
- (c) Interest of caste fellow.
- (d) Interest of political supporter.
- (e) Welfare of the area.
- (f) Interest of political factions.
- (g) Affairs of religious organisations.
- (h) Goals of particular political party.

33. Based on your personal experience how often do political leaders ask for special favour from officials?

Frequently	()	Sometimes	()
Rarely	()	Never	()

34. Sometimes it so happens that officials do not meet the request of politicians. What do you feel about the following statements :

Strongly agree	()	Agree	()
Disagree	()	Strongly disagree	()

- 1. Realising the difficulties of official the leader will not press the issue.
- 2. Leader will stop cooperating with the officials.

3. Somehow or other the leader will try to punish official.
4. The leader will demonstrate and agitate before the official.
5. The leader will complain to the superior official.
6. The leader will threaten the official of transfer.
7. The leader will not do anything.

35. Do you feel that in case of difficulty the leader, when you have shown favour, will help you.

Yes () No ()

If yes, in what way:

- (a) By approaching to his superior official.
- (b) By asking the MLA of the area to help the official.
- (c) By approaching the minister.

36. Based on your experience please let us know how often do officials ask for favours from political leaders.

Frequently ()
 Sometimes ()
 Rarely ()
 Never ()

37. Here are four statements sometimes made by people about the relationship between officials and political leaders. Please read each of them carefully and then choose the one which most accurately describes the real relationships between officials and political leaders :

- (a) When performing his duties an official has nothing to do with political leaders.
- (b) Once he has explained government policies and rules to the political leaders, the official's responsibility to them is over.
- (c) The official consults local leaders and enlists their cooperation in his work.

- (d) The official is mainly guided by the advice of political leaders.
38. People often complain about administrative inefficiency, indicate how do you feel about this observation.
- Strongly agree ()
 Agree ()
 Disagree ()
 Strongly disagree ()
39. Officials sometimes explain the reasons of ineffectiveness of administration. Some of the reasons are given below, how much you agree with the reasons ?
- (a) The planners are ill informed about real problem and set unrealistic target.
 (b) Inadequacy of staff and funds.
 (c) Goals are not clearly defined
 (d) Politicians don't cooperate
 (e) No incentive for good workers
 (f) No scope for personnel initiative
 (g) Superior officials don't give proper guidance
 (h) Decisions are delayed at higher level
 (i) Proper training is not given
 (j) People are not cooperative
 (k) Officials do not have sufficient authority to control their subordinates
 (l) Too much political interference.
40. Some of the items are given below, who in your opinion, should be responsible for them:
- | | | | |
|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
| Officials | () | Leaders | () |
| Both | () | Neither | () |
- (a) Formulation of broad policies
 (b) Fixing priorities for programme implementation
 (c) Day to day work of the programme
 (d) Distribution of loans

- (e) Selection of beneficiaries
- (f) Selection of sight for programmes
- (g) Recruitment of staff
- (h) Distribution of Government Grants
- (i) Training of Block and District staff
- (j) Evaluation of work
- (k) Promotion of staff.

41. In general how would you describe the attitude of political leaders towards officials.

Helpful
Indifferent
Unhelpful
Any other (specify)

42. What qualities would you like to seek in any political leader with whom you come into contact:

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)

43. Different rural development programmes are implemented in your area. In what way would you like to seek the cooperation of Panchayati Raj leaders :

- (a) In identification of beneficiaries
- (b) Selection of priority areas
- (c) Monitoring
- (d) Sanctioning of loan and subsidy.

44. Do you feel that present structural arrangements of Panchayati Raj Institutions are satisfactory ?

Yes () No ()

If not satisfactory what structural change would you like to suggest.

45. Do you feel that the present bureacuratic set-up at the grassroot level is satisfactory.

Yes () No ()

46. Sometimes it is reported by the general masses that officials and Panchayati Raj leaders enter into collusion and heartlessly exploit the rural masses. Do you agree with this view?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what remedy would you like to suggest ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

47. Whether local level bureaucracy unduly interferes in political affairs of local areas ?

Yes () No ()

If yes, assign reasons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

48. It is generally reported that Panchayati Raj representatives forestall people's participation in development programmes.

Yes () No ()

49. On the other hand, it is said that the rural development programmes can be successfully implemented only after ensuring effective participation of general masses. Do you agree with this statement?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what modes of people's participation would you like to suggest:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

50. Have you suggested any change in regard to powers and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

If yes, indicate your preference

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

51. Do you feel that finances are inadequate at the command of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

If yes, what suggestions would you like to make to improve the finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

(d)

(e)

52. Do you feel that loans and subsidies in regard to different rural development programmes should be kept at the disposal of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

Schedule I

PANCHAYATI RAJ REPRESENTATIVES

1. Since how long you are in Public life.

One year () Two years ()
Five years () More than five years ().

2. Since how long you are holding this Elective Post.

3. Being the representative of Panchayati Raj Institutions do you know about Democratic decentralisation and recommendation of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee.

Yes () No ()

4. What is the basic structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions in your State ?

5. Do you know that all the three organs of Panchayati Raj Institutions are functioning in your State/District.

6. Have you heard about Asoka Mehta Committee ?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what are the main recommendations of the Committee ?

7. Do you know about the steps taken in regard to implementation of Asoka Mehta Committee by the Centre/ State Government.

8. How far do you think Panchayati Raj has been able to achieve its goal ?

Fully ()
 Partially ()
 Not at all ()

If not at all, assign reasons:

9. Whether in your opinion Panchayati Raj Institutions should perform the regulatory functions or they should be involved in development programmes.

(a) Regulatory ()
 (b) Development ()
 (c) Both ()

10. If you feel that Panchayati Raj Institutions should be involved in development programmes what mode of participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions you would like to suggest:

1. Locating the priority areas
2. Identification of opportunities
3. Identification of beneficiaries
4. Monitoring and Evaluation.

11. How Panchayati Raj functionaries discharge their duties?

(a) By proxy
 (b) Active involvement
 (c) Keeping people in confidence

12. If Panchayati Raj representatives are involved in development task what criteria and consideration they should have in selection of programmes.

13. What mutual cooperation is expected from Panchayati Raj representatives and government officials in implementation of rural development programmes ?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

14. Based on your personal experience do you feel that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be scrapped.

Yes () No ()

If yes, assign reasons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

15. What role you expect to be played by government officials in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions?

16. Do you know about the code of conduct and official rules to be maintained by government officials and Panchayati Raj representatives?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what are they?

- 1.

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

17. Do you know that the persons concerned follow these code of conducts and official rules in discharge of their day to day function?

Yes () No ()

18. VLWs are supposed to be the ears and eyes of community leaders. What are your feelings about them?

Cooperative ()

Non-cooperative ()

19. If cooperative, what are the modes through which they help the community leaders and general masses.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

If not cooperative, what are the reasons?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

20. Do you feel that voluntary organisations should be associated with Rural Development tasks?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what kind of support they could lend to the Panchayati Raj leaders?

21. How voluntary organisations could prove an effective link between government officials and Panchayati Raj Institutions?
22. It is generally felt that voluntary organisations could educate the general masses in basic principles of Democracy and functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions, what are the means through which they could educate them.
23. In your opinion which are the most important agricultural programmes in your areas. Please rate the effectiveness of each programme you mention.

Effectiveness		
Much	Some	None

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)

24. Have you any idea of recently introduced integrated rural development programmes in your area please give a specific mention of them.

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)

25. How important would you say it is for officials to have concerned with political leaders?

Very much () Somewhat () Not at all ()

26. How often you consult the following:

Weekly () Monthly () Quarterly ()
Half yearly () Never ()

- (a) Block official ()
- (b) District official ()
- (c) State official ()

27. How often do you contact the following officials to get help from them in solving a problem ?

Weekly () Monthly () Quarterly ()
Half yearly () Never ()

- (a) Village official
- (b) Block official
- (c) District official
- (d) State official

28. How do you usually approach an official about a problem.

- (a) Send a letter
- (b) Personal meeting
- (c) In delegation
- (d) Telephone
- (e) Other (specify)

29. Which are the methods mentioned above most effective in your case.

30. Some of the problems are given below please indicate how frequently you approach officials with each of these problems.

Often () Sometimes () Rarely () Never ()

- (b) Law and order problem
- (c) Sanction and approval of loans
- (d) Problem of administrative dealing
- (e) Issues concerning conflict between local needs
- (f) Other (specify)

31. Politicians generally approach the officials for getting something done. How often you approach the officials with following problems:

Monthly () Sometimes () Rarely ()
Never ()

- (a) Interest of political supporters
- (b) Interest of relatives
- (c) Interest of political faction
- (d) Interest of caste fellow
- (e) Personal interest
- (f) Party interest
- (g) Welfare of the whole area
- (h) Interest of religious group
- (i) Any other

32. It is heard that some time officials approach political leaders in order to ask for special favour, what is your experience?

Frequently () Sometimes ()
Rarely () Never ()

33. When politicians are disappointed by officials they express different feelings. Here is tentative list of such feelings. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with this statement.

Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree ()
Strongly disagree ()

- (a) I would withdraw my cooperation
- (b) Official is perfectly right in refusing, hence no sense of vengeance

- (c) Official should be punished
- (d) Official ignores because he does not want to help
- (e) Official's non-cooperative attitude should be exposed
- (f) Nothing can be done against officials because they are well protected
- (g) Officials are helpless due to procedural difficulties.

34. Sometimes politicians persuade the official for some undue favour and assure them to help if in trouble. Some of the items are given below. How much you agree with them?

Often () Sometimes () Rarely () Never ()

- (a) Leader promises to shoulder the responsibility for all consequences.
 - (b) The leader approaches superior officials to intervene.
 - (c) The leader threatens the official of transfer.
 - (d) The leader offers the financial incentive to the official.
 - (e) The leader organises demonstration against the official.
 - (f) The leader persuades the official indirectly through his relations and family members.
 - (g) The leader tries to punish the official through entering bad remarks in his service book.
 - (h) The leader promises the official of better service career opportunity.
 - (i) The leader influences the official through MLA and MP.
35. Some of the pressures have been mentioned above, which pressure is most effective in your opinion indicate.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

36. How often do the officials ask for favour from political leaders?

Frequently	()	Sometimes	()
Rarely	()	Never	()

37. There are certain administrative rules, please consider each and indicate how much you agree.

Strongly agree	()
Agree	()
Strongly disagree	()
Disagree	()

- (a) Observance of all rules amounts to a lot of paper work and no complete work is done.
- (b) In regard to procedures officials have enough scope of personnel initiative.
- (c) If procedural matters come in the way of efficient implementation of any development scheme, the official should ignore them.
- (d) The rules should be strictly observed even if it amounts to delay in the implementation of development programmes.
- (e) If instructions from high officials do not apply to the local situation the local official should not be bound by that.
- (f) When conflicting instructions come from superior officers and from elected leaders, an official should usually follow the instructions of the elected leaders
- (g) An official cannot be effective if he constantly accommodate the wishes of political leaders.
- (h) The official should not take such decision which displeases the local leaders.
- (i) The official can do well if he seeks advice of political leaders in dealing with local problems.
- (j) If situation so arises the official should not compromise with principles and should not act in undemocratic manner.

38. People often complain about administrative inefficiency in government. How do you feel about this observation ?

Strongly agree () Agree ()
Disagree () Strongly disagree ()

39. Sometimes officials require the help from other sources. Whom they usually trust ?

Often () Sometimes ()
Rarely () Never ()

1. Local political organisations
2. Elected leaders of the community
3. Members of voluntary organisations
4. Higher level party leaders
5. Leaders of the cooperatives
6. Members of the ruling party
7. Coworkers
8. Village leaders of his own caste.

40. Some of the rural decisions are of vital importance to whom would you like to assign the task of decision making,

Officials () Both ()
Leaders () Neither ()

1. Formulation of general policies
2. Fixing priorities for programme implementation
3. Day to day working of the programmes
4. Distribution of loans
5. Selection of site for new programmes
6. Distribution of government funds
7. Training of block and district staff
8. Monitoring and evaluation of development programme
9. Writing confidential report of office staff.

41. People often say that there are certain things which officials must do and other things which they must not do. Of the following items, which ones do you think you must do, which ones are optional depending on the circumstances ?

*Must do**Optional**Must not do*

- (a) Carry out decisions made by zila parishad or panchayat samiti.
- (b) Implement decisions made by Block bodies which in your opinion may be unsound.
- (c) At the instance of political leaders take action againsts subordinate.
- (d) Change a policy decision at the advice of Panchayati Raj leaders.
- (e) While undertaking new programmes pay no heed to caste and religious groups.
- (f) Take a sound and definite stand against the unreasonable demands of political leaders.
- (g) Keep a powerful faction of local leaders satisfied if that action helps the implementation of government programme.
- (h) Occasionally compromise with pressure groups.
- (i) The proposals of leaders are considered favourably who enjoy massive public support, even if their proposals are unsound.
- (j) If the demands of political leaders are against the government policy the officials should ignore it even if they are in the interest of the district.
- (k) Should modify the policy on insistent popular demand.
- (l) Should convey the demands of the local leaders to superior official.
- (m) Explain government policies and programmes to the local political leaders.
- (n) Encourage local leaders to participate in local programmes not funded by the government.
- (o) Help local people in getting necessary assistance from other government departments.

(p) Bring all irregularities committed by the all political leaders to the notice of their superior officials.

42. It is generally reported that political leaders often keep themselves cut off from the common man.

Yes () No ()

Is this applicable in your case?

Yes () No ()

In brief how would you describe the attitude of officials in this area towards you?

Helpful () Indifferent ()
Unhelpful () Other (specify) ()

43. What qualities are essential for a good political leader ?

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

44. Do you feel that without consulting the Panchayati Raj leaders, the local level bureaucracy functions in complete isolation.

Yes () No ()

45. Of late there is a feeling that Panchayati Raj is like a God that failed. Do you agree?

Yes () No ()

If yes, why it has failed?

(a) Do you feel that by maintaining cooperation

between local level officials and Panchayati Raj leaders, the rural development programmes can be implemented effectively.

Yes () No ()

46. What are your reactions about the channel of communication at the local level?

Highly satisfactory () Satisfactory ()
Unsatisfactory () Not at all satisfactory ()

47. Do you feel that the present structural arrangements of local level bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj Institutions are satisfactory for implementation of rural development programmes?

Yes () No ()

If not satisfactory how can they be made functional and development oriented?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

48. Do you feel that Panchayati Raj representatives in the name of Public Service put an undue pressure on government officials for self interest?

Yes () No ()

49. Generally it is reported that the government officials succumb before the Panchayati Raj leaders. Do you agree with this statement?

Yes () No ()

If yes, why?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

50. Whether local level bureaucracy unduly interferes in political affairs of local areas.

Yes () No ()

If yes, assign reasons?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

51. It is generally reported that Panchayati Raj representatives forestall people's participation in development programmes.

Yes () No ()

52. On the other hand it is said that the rural development programmes can be successfully implemented only after ensuring effective participation of general masses. Do you agree with this statement?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what modes of people's participation would you like to suggest?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

53. Have you to suggest any change in regard to powers and functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

If yes, indicate your preference?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

54. Do you feel that finances are inadequate at the command of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

If yes, what suggestions would you like to make to improve the finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions?

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
- (e)

55. Do you feel that loans and subsidies in regard to different institutions should be kept at the disposal of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Yes () No ()

